

The Colorado Quarterly

THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Science and the Universes of Man

Theodore Puck

The New Conservatism

Archie Bahm

Life Among the Intellectuals

Jack Garlington

Language Adjustment

Thomas Brandt

Edgar Lee Masters

August Derleth

Ezra Pound or Sophocles

Donald Sutherland

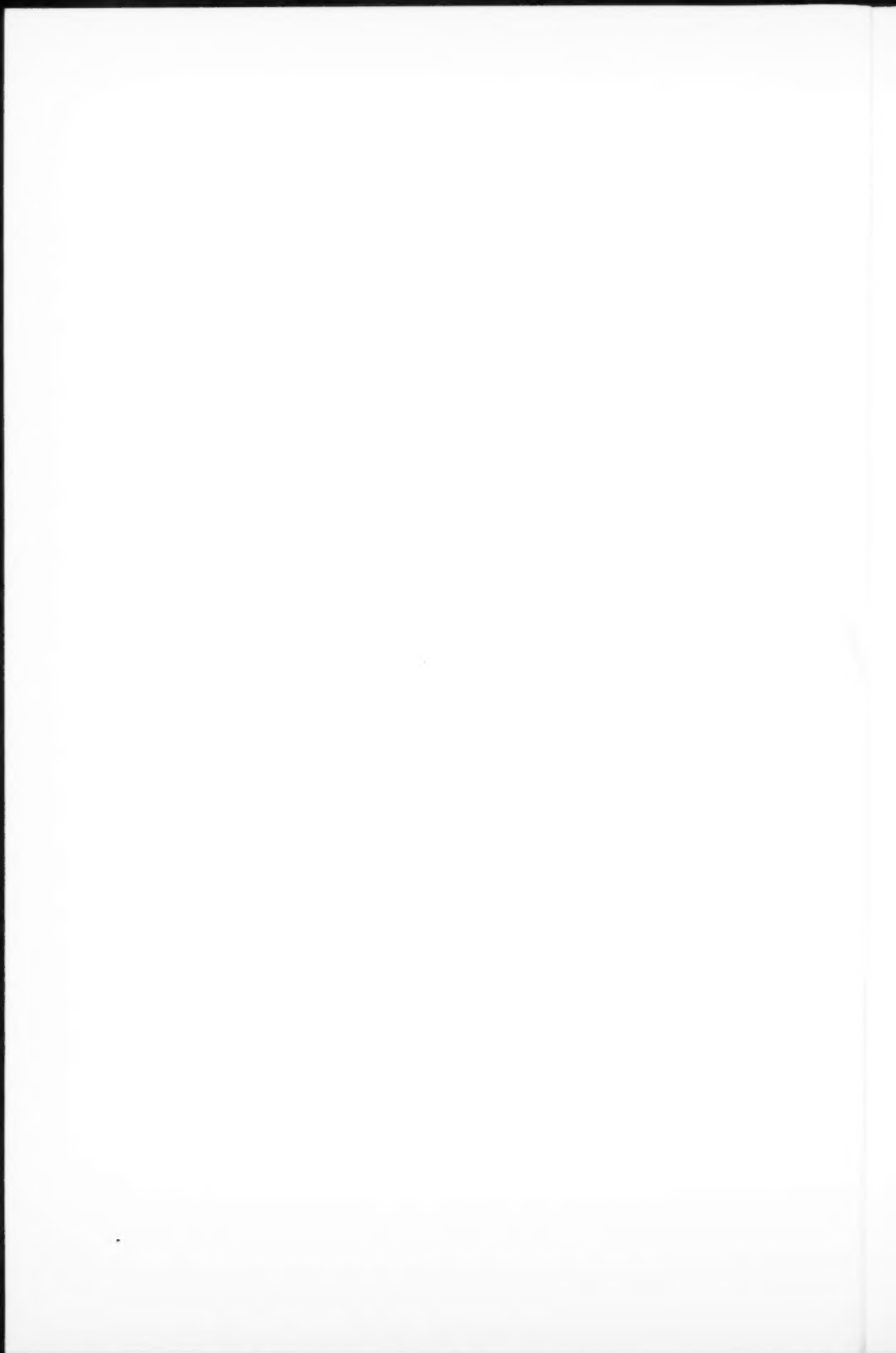
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Will Moore

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EDITOR:

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About the authors

THEODORE T. PUCK ("Science and the universes of man," p. 101) is Head of the Department of Biophysics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. His article is an adaptation of one of the 1959 Summer Lectures in the Sciences at the University of Colorado. Another article of his was published in the Autumn (1953) *Colorado Quarterly*.

JAMES C. WAUGH ("Two poems," p. 115) teaches English and coaches various athletic teams at Groton School for boys in Massachusetts. These are his first published poems.

HARVEY SWADOS ("The singer from outer space," p. 117) is the author of three books of fiction, *Out Went the Candle*, *On the Line*, and *False Coin*. His stories and critical articles have appeared in many magazines.

JAMES L. MONTAGUE ("The moon illusion," poem, p. 130) is an artist and free lance writer, whose poetry has been published in the *New Yorker*, *New York Times*, *New York Herald Tribune*, and the Autumn (1956), Spring (1957), and Autumn (1958) issues of *The Colorado Quarterly*.

ARCHIE J. BAHM ("The New Conservatism," p. 131), Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico, has published five books of philosophy, the most recent being *Types of Intuition* (University of New Mexico Press, 1959).

J. V. CROWLEY ("Watching the sheep," poem, p. 142), a graduate of Syracuse University, has published poems in *Approach*, *Yankee*, and *Four Quarters*.

JACK GARLINGTON ("Life among the intellectuals," p. 143), Assistant Professor of English at the University of Utah, was Assistant Director of the Economics Institute for orientation of foreign students held at the University of Colorado last summer. Articles by Mr. Garlington have appeared in the Winter (1955), Spring (1956), and Autumn (1957) issues of *The Colorado Quarterly*.

VERN RUTSALA ("Evening in town," poem, p. 150) is a graduate assistant at the University of Iowa. His poems have appeared in *Paris Review*, *Epoch*, and *Views*.

THOMAS O. BRANDT ("Language adjustment," p. 151), Chairman of the Department of German at Colorado College, received his Ph.D. at the University of Vienna, Austria. Since 1954, he has been Consultant in German for the *Britannica World Language Dictionary*. Poems of his appeared in the Winter and Autumn (1954) issues of *The Colorado Quarterly*.

WILL G. MOORE ("A visitor looks at the American university," p. 159), Fellow and Tutor of St. John's College, Oxford, was Visiting Lecturer in the Department of French at the University of California in Berkeley during 1958-59. He is Editor of *The Modern Language Review* and author of *Moliere, A New Criticism*. His article was written as a result of his participation in the World Affairs Conference at the University of Colorado campus last April.

ANN CASWELL ("Wind storm," poem, p. 163) of Lindsay, California, has attended the Writers' Conference in

(Continued on Page 191)

Science and the universes of man

THEODORE T. PUCK

The universe of Man—meaning the totality of sensations which reach him, the conceptual framework by which he tries to understand them, and the manipulations which he can perform to change the course of internal and external events—is constantly changing. The universe or world views of different people living closely together may differ widely. The universes of the biblical fundamentalist and the evolutionary biologist, of the poet and the physicist, of the government administrator and the basic scientist whose budget he controls, may contain some sharply divergent or even contradictory operational principles. Different parts of universes of the same person may be completely isolated from, or even inconsistent with, each other, as illustrated by the ease with which, as I have been told, the Indians of the Southwest are able simultaneously to accept Christianity and their own native religion, despite the mutually exclusive nature of large parts of their respective fundamental doctrines.

The theme of this discussion is that many of the disparate universes which Man has devised and incorporated in his various cultures throughout the million or so years of his existence are tending in our own age to converge and coalesce into a more unified structure, based more strongly on rational relationships but without denial of the needs and enormous potentialities of Man's emotional constitution or of the still infinite possibilities for future discovery and intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. While the complexities of our age and the multiplicity of counter opinions tend to obscure general recognition of the new intellectual synthesis which we now are approaching, its magnitude and quality rival or dwarf any of the previous great creative periods of mankind. And if Man can but survive the grave perils of the interaction of his present emotional immaturity with the complexities attending the initiation of the age of nuclear energy, the achievements of the next several decades should surpass the promise dimly

perceived by the intuitions of the great visionaries of historical times.

The structure and operation of the physical universe were initially the concern of religion. Virtually all religions attempt to explain, partly in allegorical, partly in cause-and-effect fashion, how the physical world of our immediate sense impressions arose and how it operates. The motions of heavenly bodies, diastrophic and volcanic movements of the earth, and unusual meteorologic phenomena have been intimately associated with supernatural visitations and portents in the pre-dawn history of virtually every people. With developing confidence in the reliability of empirical analysis, philosophy took over from religion the attempt to account, in more systematic and demonstrable fashion, for the common experiences of the different movements and interactions of material bodies. This revolution, which substituted a more predictable and consistent universe for large parts of that founded on traditional allegory which had solidified into dogma, was not accomplished painlessly. Socrates was condemned to death for denying the gods and inquiring into matters above and below the earth. Similarly, Galileo was threatened with the same fate when, almost two thousand years later, he proposed to substitute for the uneasy, philosophico-religious compromise adopted by the prevailing theocracy, a universe in which the earth is the satellite of the sun, and in which experience and logical analysis are free to overthrow any doctrine whatever, whether established by autocratic, human, or divine decree, or by previous but less extensive experience.

The scientific analysis of motion moved forward with the work of Brahe, Kepler, and Galileo to a major climax in Newton's laws of motion and principle of gravitation. Now, for the first time, it was possible to banish forever the concept of the heavens as a theater for the spectacular performances of arbitrary, supernatural forces, in turn whimsical and capricious or revengeful. The trajectories of physical objects, whether a child's ball or a comet coming within view of the earth only once a century, became in extremely large degree simple, understandable, predictable. The skies no longer were the exclusive estate of the seers, the theo-

logians, and others of the favored few who had been taken into the divine confidence. Yet, even in 1959, when man-made signals reach out to the moon and back with ease, and man-made satellites populate the heavens, the older, authoritarian universe has not completely relinquished its hold on the skies. Every morning in this, our Rocky Mountain empire, a horoscope (horrorscope) is published to provide guidance for those citizens of our democracy who still find in the magical, pre-Newtonian universe a more satisfying explanation of the heavens.

Newton had resolved the puzzles of the interaction of matter and energy in a way to make explainable ordinary experiences of the motions of all material bodies. His analysis of energy and momentum, however, also afforded tools for the intimate exploration of the structure of matter itself. Within a short time it was demonstrated that gases consist of discrete particles or molecules which are in constant, random motion; heat and temperature were at last clarified respectively as the total and average energy of this random molecular motion; and the classical transformations of matter between gas, liquid, and solid states were simply explained on the basis of the distance between the individual molecules and the degree of orderliness displayed by their close packed arrays. Thus, the first great step was taken in elucidation of the anatomy of matter.

During this period, too, the interconversion of heat and mechanical energy was demonstrated and the science of energy transformation, known as thermodynamics, was founded. Concerned with analysis of the kinds of energy change that accompany all transformations of material substance, it rapidly developed to the point where it could accurately predict what kinds of events can occur spontaneously, like the explosion of dynamite or the combustion of gasoline, as opposed to those like the synthesis of sugar from the CO_2 and water of the atmosphere, which can only proceed if some external source of energy, like sunlight, and an appropriate path for its utilization are supplied.

The evolution of thermodynamics has displayed a pattern which has recurred over and over again in scientific development. Thermodynamics began as a completely independent discipline, founded only on the fact established by experience that perpetual motion

cannot be obtained gratuitously. Eventually all of its postulates became understandable in terms of probability theory applied to the enormously large number of individual molecules which make up any macroscopic system, and all of thermodynamics suddenly fitted into the rest of molecular physics, like two halves of a jigsaw puzzle which had been separately put together. Taking on the new and imposing name of statistical mechanics, it has developed into one of the most powerful and far-reaching tools of physical analysis. In essence, it consists in a method of explaining macroscopic behavior from mathematical summation of the actions of the various classes of the individual, randomly operating elements which make up the entire ensemble. Recently it has been applied to problems of understanding and communication, and has made possible a precise, quantitative definition of information. One of the most breath-taking, conceptual accomplishments of our present era is the substitution for the vague, fuzzy conception of information which all of us have intuitively entertained from earliest childhood, of a new, simple, and precise concept, capable often of numerical measurement, and making possible exciting adventures in analysis of the operation of systems like the human intellect and of man-made machines which can not only calculate, but even think.

The eighteenth century also saw a transformation in electricity and electromagnetic phenomena. From their position of interest as a toy, these have grown, as Maxwell foretold they would, into the most versatile, mechanical servants of society, serving, it must be admitted, both worthwhile and trivial aims. But of much greater importance conceptually is the manner in which electromagnetic phenomena have provided new insights to the very nature of space, time, and matter, and much of the essential nature of electrical and electromagnetic force remains one of the most challenging of nature's enigmas.

The molecules of matter were in short order reduced to still smaller units, or atoms, of which it was demonstrated only about one hundred different types exist anywhere in the universe. Here, indeed, was an enormous simplification—demonstration of a basic simplicity and order in what had previously appeared to present an unmanageable jungle of possibilities. The molecular and

atomic hypotheses, as is well known, established the validity of one of the intuitive proposals of the Greek philosopher-poets, whose imaginative speculations of thousands of years ago on the nature of matter still stir both the mind and the emotions.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, physics, which had flowered so brilliantly, appeared to be approaching its natural end. The essential laws of energy transformation had been discovered and blocked out. The constitution of matter was understood in terms of units previously considered inconceivably small. Further refinement of detail and application to useful invention, were, of course, anticipated, but it was not expected in many quarters that physics could offer many further surprises. Adventurous souls regretted the lack of new worlds to conquer.

At this point a new revolution burst upon physics, more far-reaching in its effects upon the ultimate structure of the material universe than any previous historical development. Within the space of a relatively few years, energy was demonstrated to be not continuous, but to be made up of discrete units like separate coins; time and space were shown to be mutually linked through velocity in a way involving the speed of light, a relationship which could not have become apparent at the low speeds to which Man's past experience had been largely confined; more than 99.99 per cent of the atom was demonstrated to consist of empty space, the apparent solidity of material objects being explained as a resultant of the interaction of repulsive force fields of adjacent atoms rather than from actual contact of solid masses; and atoms were demonstrated to constitute tiny, solar-system-like organizations with a central nucleus and planetary electrons, but which exhibit a fundamental and inherent uncertainty in the descriptions of the positions and velocities of each particle at any moment. Finally, it was shown that all material particles possess properties that can only be described as waves, extending into space.

For a time this new revolution was confined to physics itself, but the cataclysm did not contain itself and spread to other sciences which had seemed to be more or less independent. While physics was still primitive and limited, chemistry had begun its separate existence in the romantic mysticism of the alchemists' dream-wish of unlimited wealth. Chemistry, gradually arising from these shady

beginnings, forged ahead on its own, distilling its own rules of chemical transformation from empirical observations and experimentation on the effects of bringing together different bodies under different conditions of concentration, temperature, pressure, and catalytic agencies. These laws led to the concept of valence or combining capacity of each atom toward other atoms. Valence was demonstrated to be an inherent, constituent property of each kind of atom. While Faraday had demonstrated an intimate connection between electrical charge and certain kinds of valence, further essential clues to the problem were found relatively slowly. The electron theory of valence, at first formulated in a primitive fashion by the chemist, finally evolved into a consistent physical picture around 1925 when the wave mechanical theory of atomic structure was able to afford for the first time a unifying and satisfying explanation of the phenomenon of chemical valence and therefore reactivity. Thus, still another revolutionary cycle had been set in motion, and chemistry and physics which had developed separately (though with numerous points of contact) now became indissolubly linked as a single discipline of molecular science. It is the conceptual fusions of this kind which have become so frequent and so far-reaching in their implications that constitute this as the age of a new and great intellectual synthesis.

The steady growth of nuclear physics and nuclear chemistry has invaded the remote regions of the stars, which have from earliest times captured Man's loftiest aspirations but which seemed destined always to be only geometric points in space, forever beyond Man's comprehension. Details of the beautiful reaction series by which stars originate, sustain themselves, and finally age and die, are becoming increasingly familiar through fusion of astronomical, physical, and chemical approaches to stellar dynamic analysis.

In many minds, this pattern of development has become frightening. It is feared that Man is multiplying information too fast and that facts are accumulating more rapidly than any mind can grasp them. It is claimed that soon science will have overproduced facts to such an extent that humanity, its intellectual capacity to absorb and use these exhausted, will be strangled by the juggernaut it has created.

This fear overlooks the difference between the collection of random facts and the construction of a new physical theory. A new theory, if it is a good one, replaces a much larger collection of facts and theories which would have been necessary to explain and predict phenomena in a given field. Sound conceptual advances enormously simplify and condense knowledge about the universe. Modern physics, I believe, does not contain nearly as much factual material as did the ancient alchemical collections or the store of incantations and mystic formulae by which other primitive cultures have sought to control the course of events in the universe. It is easily possible for any person to acquire enough factual and conceptual information to understand vast areas of the workings of the physical universe, both in macrocosmos and in microcosmos—indeed, to a degree that would have been unbelievable, even in the days of the Renaissance, the period which had as its ideal the Universal Man. Moreover, such a mastery of modern molecular science and many of its ramifications can be acquired enjoyably: it can be an absorbing and adventuresome experience, evoking excitement, awe, and aesthetic satisfactions, as is testified by the popularity of the books written by George Gamow.

But perhaps the most revolutionary of the cataclysms of modern molecular science has been in the region of the living universe. Here the active revolutionary process is still gathering momentum, even though the results already achieved stagger the imagination of those aware of their significance.

Study of life in its various manifestations is undoubtedly as old as Man. Here, too, the earliest approach had to be that of the fairy tale. When Man sought more truthful understanding but still lacked modern, refined techniques necessary for examination of the workings of such complex systems, little more than observation and cataloging of the different kinds of living forms, their life cycles, habitats, and relatively gross behavior was possible. The monumental classification system of Linnaeus strongly suggested lines of relationship that could hardly be explained rationally except as an index of the path taken by evolutionary development. Yet, not until presentation of the wealth of evidence for the occurrence of evolutionary processes by Darwin and Wallace, together with the proposal of natural selection as its directing mechanism,

did the idea of species development as an active, continuous process gain widespread currency.

Modern biology may perhaps be dated from the cell theory of life, first proposed in 1840. While it was quickly accepted that all the recognized forms of life are built on a plan involving the cell as the fundamental building block and while examination of the cells of various tissues rapidly became established as one of the basic methods for examination of pathological processes in medicine, a more profound understanding of the nature of living processes was not rapid in coming. Many advances in understanding of the anatomy and physiology of body functions like digestion, respiration, and nervous coordination were achieved; the nature of infection and immunologic defense mechanisms were demonstrated; many of the more obvious chemical constituents of the body were identified, classified, and characterized at least grossly as to function.

But two factors have been particularly dramatic in ushering in the current conceptual revolution in biology. The first of these was the development of the systematic study of genetic processes begun so fundamentally by Mendel at the turn of the present century and continued in equally bold, logical, and elegant fashion by innovators like Morgan, Muller, and others. The study of genetics has made possible unified treatment of all living forms, even including the ultramicroscopic viruses. The second major theme has been the demonstration of the molecular chain of events by which the genes carry out their two all-embracing functions: control of the sum total of the chemical processes which a cell may be able to command and biological reproduction, the central mystery of life.

While these developments have been so recent that precise dating is difficult, I would suggest 1940 is the approximate time at which the era of molecular biology came of age. At this stage living processes took their place alongside of physics and chemistry as a third member of the triumverate of independent conceptual structures which had fused to form the new great synthesis of the molecular living and non-living universe. For the first time, Man has had a detailed picture in terms of concrete elements and operations, readily understandable and demonstrable, of how a

cell can reproduce itself; how different character traits will be distributed among the progeny of either asexual or sexual reproduction; how the molecular mechanisms insure the exceedingly great fidelity of the biological copying process; how, despite such extraordinary mechanisms to insure fidelity of the individual units, deliberate means to insure constant experimentation with new combinations is built into the reproductive process; how occasionally an individual unit itself may be altered by intramolecular rearrangement induceable by various agents; and how the specific proteins which give every cell its individuality are synthesized step by step from component small molecules which are selected and lined up in a definite order in accordance with a pre-ordained sequence contained in a code made up of a linear array of adenine-guanine and thymine-cytosine pairs contained in the gene molecule, the order of these repeating elements spelling out, as by Morse code, the exact constitution of each of the structures that make up the cells' structural and operational machinery.

To be sure, many gaps exist in this picture (and many of these are being filled in with amazing rapidity), and doubtless details will require correction and amplification. Nevertheless, for the first time Man has an understandable picture of the nature of the living process in terms of a sequence of natural, rather than supernatural or mystical, events. And the picture so formed is breathtaking in its simplicity and complexity, in its marvelous ingenuity of detailed operation yet essential unity of principle; in the extent of its rigidities and, at the same moment, its enormous flexibilities and virtually unlimited potentialities. The picture which emerges of the cell and its economy challenges the imagination of the poet as well as that of the scientist—a picture in which molecular structures, each of the delicacy and tenuousness of a spider web, by means of the pattern of carefully arranged symmetries and asymmetries of their atomic arrangements, produce the variegated phenomena of which life consists.

One of the most astonishing by-products of this picture has been the realization that life processes comprise a central, universal pattern that is shared by every living cell, be it of a man, mollusk, or microbe, and that each individual living form possesses its own unique variations of biochemical patterns which modulate this

basic pattern, just as variations on a fundamental theme occur in a great musical composition.

The enormous illumination about the molecular nature of life processes is just beginning to affect Man's understanding of his own biology. Structural determinations of whole new classes of molecules which exercise profound effects on mammalian functions are becoming almost commonplace. Within the last three years, the chromosomes of Man have been completely delineated and each of the individual members identified. The mechanism of chromosomal sex determination in Man has been brought to a new degree of analysis and shown to be remarkably different from that of *Drosophila*, which had been the best studied model hitherto available. The location of the human genes which control our hereditary potentialities is now being mapped in active programs going on in several laboratories. Already, revolutionary new understanding has been achieved in a large group of human diseases, but the promise for the future overwhelms the accomplishments of the present. We have learned how to introduce specifically desired changes into particular genes in lower forms of life. In a short time we shall be able to manipulate at least some human genes, and thus to vary at will some of the genetic constitution of our offspring. I hasten to add that I am here referring to specific, directed gene changes accomplished by processes like those of transformation in the *pneumococcus*, not the random mutations produced by radiation and similar toxic agents, which are non-specific and uncontrollable in their effects, and which, of necessity, introduce an enormously larger number of defective than beneficial changes in any organism. Clearly, the time is almost here when Man shall have power over his biological constitution as well as over the non-living universe, to an extent not even attributed to the legendary, god-like figures invoked by the ancient poets.

But there are many who, perhaps with good cause, do not look bravely at this new world which is inevitably opening up before us. The prospect of placing such god-like powers in the hands of men and their governments as we know them today can hardly contribute peace of mind to any thinking person. However, while

such fears may be justified, their remedy lies not in the advice heard still today as in Galileo's time that Man should give up or at least emasculate science, returning to a more primitive way of life based on mysticism, intuition, emotional and poetical inspiration, or some other set of principles to be accepted on faith but not to be subjected to the combined test of experience and rational analysis which constitutes the scientific method.

The distrust of science which characterizes our time stems from many different causes. Some people, through semantic error, identify science with the too highly materialistic value systems of our society. They believe that science, dealing as it often (though not always) does with material objects, implies that the only true and worthwhile things are material, like money and the things it can buy. Other people are made suspicious by pretenses of individual scientists to speak with the authority of science about issues which lie, for the present at least, outside the universe of science. No responsible scientist should discuss issues whose determinants lie outside the field of science without making crystal clear that, in so doing, he is leaving the universe of science with its specific criteria for determining truth. Failure to do so is as fraudulent as the sale to an unsuspecting victim of land for which the seller does not own title.

Still another source of distrust of science arises from the feeling that science is incompatible with the creation and experience of beauty, that it tends to replace Man's rich life of the emotions with a cold, synthetic substitute which is mechanical and unsatisfying. This attitude can only reflect a failure to understand the true nature of science and a tendency to confuse it with the development of cigarette filters, plastic gadgetry, and neon signs. These incidental by-products, while arising as a result of scientific development, no more reflect its essential nature than does the singing commercial of television embody the essence of the work of Brahms or Chopin or whatever other composer may have furnished the original theme from which the modern "application" arose. Science draws at least as deeply from Man's imaginative depths as any other form of activity. It only imposes an additional requirement on the final product, namely, that the ultimate result shall yield relationships whose truth can be clearly demonstrable to anyone

who takes the trouble to test it. Far from being artificial, the whole aim of science is to get as close as possible to nature and to understand how phenomena are controlled in the universe which we all share and in which we all can communicate. Scientific truth is that body of relationships which mankind has learned to establish independently of the edicts of priest, ruler, or divine revelation. Nor are its generalizations lacking in esthetic and emotional experience of the most moving kind. Who can follow the development of Maxwell's theory of the distribution of velocity among the molecules of a gas—perceiving how, from the utter chaos and complete abandonment of these blind careenings through space, there inevitably arise the beautiful and reproducible patterns of energy distribution, which give form to the most precise and rigorously obeyed laws of the universe—without being profoundly affected in a way not different in kind from the reaction evoked by a Beethoven symphony? Abandonment of the scientific way of life would spell for mankind a return in the direction from which he has so painfully made his way—to domination by his terrors and by the people who would use these to enslave him. It is no accident that so many of the fundamental scientists of Germany were driven out or liquidated as a prelude to the reign of terror of Nazi bestiality.

There is, I believe, one further source of uneasiness in the ordinary man's orientation to science, and particularly its biological developments. It has to do with the fear that science will resolve Man into a completely mechanical system, thereby eliminating the belief in his own divinity, mission, or ultimate potentiality for accomplishment of great and meaningful purposes. The need to believe in such purpose for human life appears deep-seated in Man's nature. Man has always tried to find in existence more ultimate purposes than the satisfactions of his immediate sensual appetites, and in the drive to find support for this inner need, he will, if necessary, embrace beliefs and philosophical systems which are otherwise highly objectionable.

This objection to science and its methods would, indeed, be pertinent if it were true. Actually, however, far from limiting Man, science offers him a path for realizing the magnificent potentialities of human nature which have been foretold by the prophets of the major revealed religions.

The human mind is one which has developed the remarkable capacity for making evaluations of a situation and arriving at decisions. The developments of science which have here been sketchily summarized now provide Man with potent tools for exploring the potentialities both of the external universe and of himself. It is unfortunately all too common to look at modern Man as the culmination of a long historical development of which only the last few chapters remain to be written. Actually, the fact is that humanity has hardly begun its adolescence, and adolescence here, as in other situations, is composed of a queer mixture of great promise for the future and depressing lapses into infantilism, the frequent frustration bringing on threats of violence and emotional conflict. But by means of the tool which science provides, with the biological as well as the physical universes at his command, Man can, if he wishes, set himself along the path which will unlock the potentialities of human nature. He can create of himself a being to surpass the most extravagant promises of the ancient mystic prophecies. All that mankind has admired and has been inspired by, now appears as his to achieve if he wishes it.

"If he wishes" is the key. For science alone cannot direct the goals, though it can provide the means for their accomplishment. Traditionally, Man has looked to religion and philosophy for assistance in the setting of these goals. Today, however, these particular goal-seeking mechanisms seem out of tune with the times. Religion historically was a revolutionary force: it turned men's minds from brutal and terror-ridden propitiation of forces, which were the projection of Man's insecurities, toward an orientation of love and the brotherhood of mankind. In our own time, however, religion often seems more preoccupied with the minutiae of the individual parts of the allegory with which men at different times have clothed its central message than with its content. Both religion and philosophy historically have been the pioneer activities for Man's exploration of the external universe and of himself. Each of these, in turn, has investigated vast regions of phenomena for which tools were eventually devised, permitting application of the scientific method. This pioneering and exploratory function of these human activities is indispensable to Man's continuing development. More than ever before does he need the kinds of bold

exploration of goals and sustaining confidence in his ability to live meaningfully which religion and philosophy are fitted to supply. Without this assistance in fixing goals, science could, indeed, become degenerate. Yet today, both religion and the various humanistic philosophies seem tired, and in many cases their faces are turned more to the past than the future. It is fashionable to hear self-styled humanists boast of how little science they know and to parade instead their knowledge of the classics.

But the problems of Man today involve complexities which are not considered by the classics. Science and its applications have transformed and enlarged Man's universe so as to make his previous universes resemble a child's nursery. The classics form a treasury of the most worthwhile distillates from Man's past experience. But, in addition to reading of the classics, there is urgent need for the writing of new classics of religion and humanism, which will reaffirm for mankind generally the meaningfulness of human existence in the modern world and offer more specific guides for the problems which affect the modern human spirit. Such a message must be framed in a fashion which is consistent with the new universe of science, while it maps new and challenging goals for Man's inner growth. Never before in history has Man been in a position as now to fulfill all of his material needs. But as long as war and its senseless horrors remain a feature of human existence, how dare we pretend that a sufficient understanding of Man's emotional and spiritual problems is already achieved?

This is not to say that the ancient truths about Man and his goals are now false. But, while appreciating them, we must also appreciate that in Man's emotional and spiritual life, just as in science, there must constantly be discovery of new and more far-reaching truths that will illuminate even more of Man's relationships to other men and the rest of the universe. The formulations of the past must constantly be re-examined and retranslated for the future, just as Newton's truths were extended by Einstein to explain new experiences and possibilities which arose when Man came to grips with exceedingly high velocities. If religion, philosophy, and science could join forces to face the future, Man would appear ready to launch the greatest adventure of his existence so far.

Two poems

JAMES C. WAUGH

SUNDAY DINNER

Hunched over the carcass
Of a dove, they pick each
Other's bones. Henna-haired
And jackal-jawed, she shakes
A shattered drumstick
Across the alabaster cloth
To where creased crowsfeet score
A symphony of thistles.
His catgut nerves are pitched
To jazzband lunacy,
And plunging hypodermics
Meddle deep within his straw.
In the fag-end panel
Of their serial cartoon,
The arching merrythought
Rainbows a forked covenant.
The wishbone snaps. Tight-eyed
They dream each other dead.

LOW TIDE

The storm is three days past. The wrinkled wind
Sheared south, the surf beats measured once again.
Barefoot, at dawn, I search the shattered beach.
Peppermint striped whelks, snow white angel wings,
A Chinese alphabet with orange hieroglyphs,
Delicate coquinas, some blood red pectens,
And one junonia lined with chestnut spots
I take as heirlooms from the willing sea.
The sea of faith, in Arnold's solemn phrase,
Is edged with naked shingles and, ebbing, sounds
A melancholy roar. Perhaps. Or else withdraws
And leaves these shells as brief epiphanies
That beg response from our mind's eye and ear.
Thus Swift describes the thin pearl jingle shells
Not as one inch bivalves, but as mermaids'
Kisses to drowned sailors which flaked from numb
And unresponding lips. The sea of myth.
The sea of change. From soundings rich and strange
Its foaming rhythm floods our barren dreams
And flecks the edges bright with winding shards.
With singing consonance that ring our inner ear.
Soon the tide will turn and come spilling up the sand.
While time affords, I poke in seaweed pools
To find a purple knuckled lion's paw.

The singer from outer space

HARVEY SWADOS

It hardly seems possible to me that there can be an American citizen who never heard of Monty Mars. But there are times when I recall such illustrious dead as Joe Penner, Russ Colombo, and Thelma Todd, and draw a blank from full-grown adults who should presumably know better; so what can I reasonably expect when I speak of one who flashed across our horizon like a flying saucer and then disappeared from the collective memory faster than any suicide?

It seems particularly odd, though, when you consider that Monty was both intelligent and strong-willed. In my business I have handled intelligent movie stars and strong-willed celebrities, but very seldom have I encountered both characteristics in the same person; and in the main the personalities whose careers I have promoted have been neither bright nor Napoleonic. But Monty Mars was not only college-educated, as our parents would have said; he was also a hard-headed and pragmatic type with a passionate, permanent craving for an *idée fixe* to which he could cling. Not that that was such an unusual combination in the days when Monty and I were in college together; but he was one of the few such who didn't place that shrewdness and idealism at the disposal of the Young Communist League. I had remembered him (before we met again many years later) as having a ferociously possessive attitude towards English literature, as if he had taken out an option to buy it, and his looks matched his ambitions: squat and stubbornly formed, his behind was broad from sitting too long in the Reference Room of the 42nd Street Library; his eyes, behind tortoise-shell glasses, were bulbous and fishy from peering at double columns of fine print; his hair was as scrubby and coarse as sage-brush from being dug at with his determined fingers while he pored over the double-crostics of the seventeenth century rhyme-sters.

I had utilized the intervening years to busy myself in the world

singer

of public relations and to acquire a modest competence; but while I was stashing it away, Monty, so he informed me when he had looked me up (he had read my name in a Broadway column and met me by appointment in a 49th Street cafeteria behind a cup of coffee and a piece of Danish), had been playing it safe with a desk job in the city water department. His passion for literature still burned as brightly as ever, so much so that he was probably unique among his colleagues in refusing to regard his civil service position as something that had to be clung to forever even though it was hateful, like an ugly or ill-tempered wife without whom nevertheless life would be unthinkable; no, for him it was merely an electric blanket that had served its purpose through the cold and stormy seasons, but could be safely cast aside now that the skies had cleared.

For the fact was that he had a Project, and what he really wanted, "aside, of course, from security for my wife and child, is time. Time, and the opportunity to forge ahead with the Project."

Naturally, I had to ask him about the Project, and he favored me with a confidential squint through his aquarium-type bifocals. He took them in his hand and pointed them at me by the bow. "I have been engaged for some years in a massive inquiry aimed at enumerating, in Burkean terms, fifty-seven varieties of ambiguity in Empson."

"Is that a lifetime job?"

"I conceive of it as an introductory chapter to my real life work—the systematic introduction of clarity into literary criticism. And *that* will really require a lifetime of dedication, like being a nun, or a test pilot."

"Well . . . the best of luck to you, old boy."

That wasn't what he wanted at all. "You can help me, if you will. I wouldn't have looked you up if I didn't think so." He added hastily, "Not that I didn't want to see you anyway."

I had to tell him that Empson was only a name to me, like Beluga caviar and other brain foods, and that the only Burke I'd known since schooldays had been a smooth operator born Berkowitz who beat me out of three weeks' pay for pushing a show that folded in Philadelphia.

It didn't faze him. "You misunderstand me," he said coolly.

"I'm perfectly capable of forging ahead on my own with the Project. But in order to be able to whip it into shape while I'm still young and vigorous I'm not only going to have to leave my job, I'm going to have to make a quick killing, enough to last me for years and years. And that's where I need your help—in your professional capacity."

I pride myself on being able to smell a crank a block away. When Monty started on his philosophy of life I looked around for the nearest exit. But he fixed me with that eye like a swollen flashlight bulb and inside of two minutes I found myself hypnotized by his sheer reasonableness.

"Since every kind of business is a racket," he said, "with all due respect, it became a question of which racket I should go into. Business as such is out, first because it takes money to make money, if you'll excuse the cliché, and second because it takes too long. With a family to support, I can't risk violating the law. What's left? Show business." And he gave me the horrible smile of a paralytic, with just half his face, the other half remaining grave and motionless. With a sinking heart I realized that it meant he was winking at me.

"I have a gimmick," he went on, "that I have absolute confidence will make you and me fabulously rich in a matter of a few years."

A thousand times or more that line has been my cue to swallow an ulcer pill and mumble something about my analyst expecting me. This time I hesitated; Monty ended the pregnant moment of silence by plunging in like a greased-up Finn I once owned a piece of—he used to dive headfirst into Sheepshead Bay in the dead of winter to train for a Channel crossing that never came off.

"I'm going to become a pop singer," Monty said angrily, as if daring me to haul him out of the ice water into which he had plunged. "Not just a roadhouse groaner, but one of the fabulous few. And not just because I can hold a tune and used to sing solo parts with the chorus at college, but because I've got a dodge that's out of this world."

I repeated the last phrase stupidly, as though he had said something worth pondering over.

"That's it exactly. I've made a careful study of the space craze, and I've got the whole thing taped. According to the best calcula-

tions it peters out between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, and doesn't pick up again until you come to the so-called adults, the morons who buy the comic books and watch the TV shows. The in-between group, the adolescents, are the ones that support the big-time singers. What I want to do is bridge the gap, catch the kids before they've come back to earth from the interplanetary crap and hold on to them until they get the cash to buy records and pay their way in to hear me. My name is going to be Monty Mars, and I'm going to be out of this world—I'm going to be the Singer from Outer Space."

I didn't even bother to try to talk him out of it. Besides, discounting his background and his unlikely appearance, his fanatical assurance made me feel that just maybe . . . However, I did try to point out that the big popular successes I knew all thought of themselves as great artists, and that it was highly improbable that you could make it unless you were convinced that what you were doing (even if it was only recording a novelty number for the drugstore trade) was of transcendent importance. And not just as a means either. Monty reassured me that the ends—financial independence and the freedom to demolish Empson—were so vital to him that he was ready to give himself over body and soul to the means, and that in addition he had some original ideas for promoting the space routine. I took the bait.

But when I met his wife and kid, Estelle and Jeffrey, I hated myself for ever having let him con me. Monty had invited me up for dinner to talk things over in detail, but I hate home cooking. Enough of a concession, I thought, for me to make the trip to the Bronx; so we settled for an evening visit, a cup of tea and some of Estelle's homemade honey cake. The outside of the cake was hard as porcelain and the inside stuck to the roof of my mouth, and Estelle had a Spanish castanet way of clicking and flashing her dentures that reminded me of Carmen Miranda on an off-day. As for Jeffrey, he was one of those ten-year old snots that seem like walking advertisements for birth control. I took one look at him crouched in front of the television, sticking his wise two cents' worth into the conversation long after he should have been asleep, and I decided that if his mother didn't take him to a child guidance clinic she should have. As it was, I was convinced that while Monty

spent his evenings buried in the seventeenth century, Estelle busied herself with writing letters to the paper. Dear Dr Franzblau, My husband and child are competing for my affection . . .

Anyway, the idea of those two dependents being an incentive for a grown man to indulge in the kind of idiocy that Monty was contemplating was as revolting as a twin-bill laff movie taken before lunch. But I had committed myself while my mouth was glued with honey cake; so I took the easiest way out by booking him into a beer and pizza flytrap in Queens that featured a non-union girl accordionist with satin trousers and acne, and was patronized by Latin laborers who sneaked in with their girl friends while their wives were home playing cards. It was a weekend date, Monty didn't even have to lose a half-day from City Hall or wherever he worked, and it seemed to me that with average luck nobody would ever hear about what we had committed in Queens.

Cautious to the end, I took up a position at the end of the bar, between the telephone booth and the front door, so that I could either duck or get out and warm up the motor of my car when the bottles started flying. How wrong I was!

In less than ten minutes he had all those stolid philanderers and their floozies stamping and shouting like holy rollers filled with mountain dew. Before he was through with the last of his four numbers I was in the phone booth frantically dialing Western Union, with the yells of Monty's first fans racketing in my ears through the glass door.

His routine that first night was essentially the same as it was later on when the bobbysoxers were tearing the clothes off his back and kissing his picture before they went to sleep. He came on in a one-piece navy-blue coverall reminiscent of the siren suits that Winston Churchill affected during his heyday, and when he took off his solar cap (plexiglass, denim and scotch tape) there was his matted hair done up in a greasy Indian braid in reverse coming almost to a dangling point in front of his forehead, like Skeeze's. That hairdo caught the barbers of America with their clippers down—for a while it was almost as deadly as scrabble or pony tails. And the cap! Monty had not only designed the thing so it could be cheaply mass-produced; he had even calculated from the outset what his percentage should be when he signed over the manufactur-

ing rights. With this revelation—which he disclosed not without a certain pride—I began to get an inkling of the genius that had been lying fallow, so to speak, in the Water Department.

After that nothing surprised me. I took it in stride when he borrowed on his life insurance in Buffalo so that I could hire a crew of girls from Hutchinson High School to mob him. As it developed, he hardly needed them. The hairdo took ten years off his age, which he had counted on when he devised it; and he lifted the roof right off the Town Casino when he raised his tortured head in the baying howl that sounded to me like the sobbing of a strangulated Russian wolfhound, but had for the masses an eerie unearthly quality, like a full-page *Life* photo of the wind whistling through the planets.

So it was that we whirled through space, from triumph to triumph, from one boxoffice record to another, at the Meadowbrook, the Rustic Cabin, and finally the Paramount. Giddy with success, I ventured from time to time to tender to the brilliant goose who was showering me with golden eggs some tentative suggestions for the further exploitation of his interstellar attractiveness. Invariably I found that he had anticipated me: his Empson assaults had given way (only temporarily, he assured me) to a spiral-binder notebook in which he jotted further practical reflections, ranging from minor but useful tax dodges to grandiose publicity schemes requiring the connivance of governors, UN delegates, and, in one case, the White House.

Thus it was that one day in Las Vegas, where even hardened lady gamblers were fracturing one another's insteps with their spike heels in the painful effort to close in on Monty, I was engaged in fabricating a new press book for my hero with special emphasis on boiler-plate material for the women's pages of weekly rural newspapers: "Monty's Favorite Recipe," "Is Monty Really Superstitious?" "Monty's Childhood—Right Out of This World." I owed it to him, I felt, to point out that I was deliberately skirting the main issue, the one that millions of semi-literate females were palpitating to lip-read: "Monty's Cosmic Private Life," because experience had convinced me that he would be better off with an Italian movie queen for a consort, or even with no consort at all, than with what he had left behind in the Bronx.

This time Monty didn't even bother to chuckle. "I'm afraid I'm ahead of you again." He removed his cheaters and inspected them judiciously. "I made it clear to Es from the start that I would not involve her and Jeff in any of this mess. I haven't told you before, but we've bought a quiet little place in Connecticut where no one associates us with the space madness. It's a very pleasant retreat for me between shows, and I think they're safe from publicity. So you can feel free to describe me as a single, singular being."

Such was Monty's extraordinary spirit. In the midst of haggles over Hollywood contracts, imbroglios in television studios, capital-gains maneuvers, jet flights to Greenland to entertain icebound troops, personal appearances at settlement houses and finishing schools to explain to the underprivileged that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer and to the overprivileged that Jews and Negroes are at least as good as everyone else, my only thought, in my own crude way, was that Estelle, her teeth, and her brat would be an impediment to the soaring flight of the greatest property I'd ever had. But Monty looked at it the other way around: whether dangling his feet, espadrilles and all, in the spleen-shaped Las Vegas pool, or crouched in my 46th Street office, peering out across Father Duffy Square at the dangling sign painters creating in mid-air a triple life-size Robert Mitchum, fangs emerging expectantly as he floated like a gleaming Technicolor god on Marilyn Monroe's golden bosom, instead of gloating over the prospect of replacing Mitchum on the astral couch (because that's exactly where we were heading, straight for Marilyn on the next available Super Strato Cruiser), he saw it all merely as a gaudy bore that he had to put up with for *their* sake.

Not just for their sake, though. There was Empson still, and after Empson the major work. He emptied the dregs of his celery tonic bottle into the loving cup that I had been awarded long ago for sportsmanlike sponsorship of a marathon dance in Covington, Ky., and said, "You *must* believe me. Those things mean nothing to me—not my Flying Saucer Jetmobile, or my Winged Mercury Customcrafted Shoes made from the skins of flying fishes, or my famous hideout on the Mount of Venus where I'm supposed to entertain the cream of interplanetary society. They only represent conspicuous expenditures that I resent because of the stretch-out

effect they have on my annuities. I live only for my intellectual future."

For the first time I suspected that he was protesting too much, but I couldn't put my finger on why, since I knew that his aversion to the things he mentioned was perfectly sincere. I became more uneasy when he mentioned to me one day (he had no one else to talk to—obviously Estelle was less interested in literary criticism than in running around in her station wagon to collect her neighbors' used Bikinis for Thailand War Relief) that Empson had lived for a long time in China. I hurried to the library to check up, and was somewhat relieved to find no instance where Empson had come out for American recognition of Red China.

Nevertheless I insisted on his promising that he would keep his intellectual adventures strictly under cover, as a security measure. I felt that I was on firm ground here, and he did listen attentively when I said: "The successful publicity man has to feel *beforehand*, like a stripper, how much the public will take. Afterwards is too late. I am convinced that intellectuality makes good publicity only in small doses, and even then that it pays off only for those who make a kind of gag out of it. On the West Coast they favor the college routine: there's hardly a starlet who hasn't been at the head of her class in Seventh Century Chinese Art at UCLA. On the East Coast we lean to books: picture editors are always receptive to eight by ten glossies of a tall tomato from the Copa line curled up on the sofa in bra and panties with her headlights winking at you over volume five of Toynbee. But not for Monty Mars. You must see that it would be too risky."

He saw, but he was unable to conceal his contempt for the suckers. On this, arguing got me nowhere, because instead of its being the emotional reaction I'd feared, it was still another deliberately thought-out, brilliant gimmick like all the rest, and it worked like a fire hydrant on a bunch of sweaty slum kids. The more he turned it on, the more they loved it.

"It's simple enough. If I'm out of this world I've got to be a superior man. And if I'm superior then I've got to look down on them. I reasoned it out even before that first night in Queens. If I didn't call them morons, creeps, shnooks and every other word that comes into me head when I look at those brainless faces, then

the illusion would be gone. And they'd know it even before I did. Unquestionably, they cherish my rudeness."

"Hi, morons!" he'd yell at them when he opened the stage door into the sea of wet mouths, the bobbing tide of gaping white faces, the autograph books fluttering like ships' pennants.

"Look at me, Monty!" they'd scream back. "I prayed for you, Monty!" "Answer my letters, Monty!" until long after he'd waved, with his thumb between two fingers, "So long, morons," and was halfway down the street in his Flying Saucer.

Then the sickening day came when he pushed it too far. How many sleepless nights I've spent trying to figure out what got into my meal ticket to make him kick our fortunes away! At first I put it down to carelessness, but that was out of character; then to superciliousness, but that was only a surface answer. Finally I had to believe that he had done it deliberately, as a kind of dare, the way a test pilot will one day risk his neck on just one extra spin, to see if he was right, or I was right, or just maybe the crowd was right . . .

What happened was simply that a big, good-looking girl reporter came aboard our suite on the Flying Cloud for a final interview before we sailed for Honolulu and found a pile of quarterlies and British journals lying on the table under her nose. I would have sworn that they weren't there five minutes before she came in. I sidled over and tried to slide them out of sight. A mistake. Smooth as butter she snatched them back and leafed them over casually while she asked Monty if it was true that he was going to go in for dramatic roles. Monty made the automatic answer and then she said, "About these magazines. When I was at Smith I had an instructor . . ." and then I knew we were lost.

Monty tried insulting her, her teacher at Smith, her job. Nothing worked. She just let her pleased smile get bigger and bigger, like a kid smearing peanut butter, until it spread clear across her face. I never saw so many teeth in my life, not even on Estelle, and these were triumphant teeth. After Monty capitulated, they spent a happy forty-five minutes fanning the air with Winters, Tate, and Warren as though they were the Giant outfield, but for me it wasn't funny. When it started to lag a little I gave the girl a cigarette and said, "Of course all this is off the record."

She laughed merrily. "But that's impossible. This is the best

story I've ever had."

I could have strangled her. "We'll deny it." I blew out the match I was holding and let her light the cigarette herself.

She showed me her profile and turned to Monty, still chuckling. "I'm sure these magazines have your name in their subscription files."

The story broke on the Coast and spread eastward like a stain. By the time we hit New York, Monty was all washed up with the morons.

He took it very hard. I could scarcely bear to look at his face that first night he came out on the street and elbowed his way through the crowd, muttering, "Look out, morons," only to have them howl back, "Look out yourself, Egghead! Gasbag! Shtunk!"

He was hurt as only a great leader can be when his followers turn against him, and bewildered and resentful too; for as he said with bitter justification, his baying had never been more out of this world, his performance never more skilled. I found that when he asked me, "Why have they turned against me? Why wasn't I entitled to have a brain of my own?" he really wanted answers; and it kept my mind off my own horrible disappointment when I tried to explain why his bookings were being cancelled and his contracts dropped at expiration.

"You could have gotten away," I said, "with being a repentant Communist, because that's more or less expected of entertainers. I think you could have gotten away with being a queer, because nowadays they just call it a form of neurosis, and besides the papers wouldn't dare touch it. With luck, you might even have carried off drug addition, or illegal residence as a deportable alien—public sympathy would have been on your side if the government had tried to ship you back to Mars. Being a highbrow, though, is the unforgivable sin. It isn't caused by weakness or generosity or ignorance. It's too deliberate. And when the goons found out about you, you weren't just distant and unapproachable any more—you were just like them, only better-educated and with more pretensions—and that's the worst insult of all."

My speech may have helped me, but I can't say what it did for Monty. It was autumn then, and he would stand before the rain-spattered windows with his hands folded behind his back, staring

down at the streaked taxis and the umbrellas like shiny black mushrooms, for so long that I'd get frightened, wondering what he was thinking and what he'd do next. It was only after he told me that he had decided to face up to the inevitable that I finally understood Monty for the first time since we'd started on our big roller coaster ride.

"Supposing you had a kid and he had a plastic toy that he broke," Monty said thoughtfully. "For a while you'd go crazy trying to mend it, but after a while you'd realize that you were wasting your time on something that couldn't be fixed and wasn't worth fixing anyway, not when you could go out and buy another one. Well, I'm throwing the toy away. I'd have to be a complete fool to try to hang on while I was slowly sliding all the way back to that pizza parlor in Queens. What for? I've almost reached my savings goal, and it's time I got to work on the Project. I'm grateful for the opportunity, but it's time I said goodbye to you and to what's left of my public."

And he gave me a brave, heartbreaking smile straight out of his last movie. At that moment I realized what had never penetrated in all the time I'd been gloating over my 10 percent: Monty was panicked to his toes at the thought of losing the morons. He didn't want their money or the things their money would buy (including time for the Project)—he'd been sincere about that—but he'd grown to love the screeching and the hollering and the public orgasms, to love them and to feel that he was entitled to them forever. It was something he didn't dare admit even to himself, which was why he'd developed the routine of insulting those he loved most.

Well, you can say, if the point of all this is going to be that Monty Mars wound up where he started, living in a flat and grubbing away at his literary criticism, then it's instructive in a way, but that's how show business is. Is Ann Sheridan still the Oomph Girl? Has Rudy Vallée still got his megaphone? Who knows? Only their families.

But that's not quite the point. Because I saw Monty not long ago, at his country house, and he wasn't pining away, or repining, or even slaving on his Project. As a matter of fact he was very happy and it's my guess that he's happy to this day.

When I got out to his place I had to admire the fresh air, the lot

line, the new wing on the house for Monty's study, Jeffrey's scout uniform and Estelle's cooking. After dinner, thank God, Jeffrey had a scout meeting and Estelle had an executive committee session of her chapter of the American Association of University Women; so Monty and I had a chance to put up our feet and take a good look at each other. What surprised me, although I couldn't say so, was his new air of gentility, of being trimmed, barbered, and kempt in a way that would have been unthinkable when he'd been a bookworm burrowing away in the Water Department. Maybe it was the new glasses, but even his eyes seemed less myopic and bugged, more discreetly fixed in their sockets.

Apparently I looked to him as though the country air was too much for me, because the first thing he did was to lower the glass louvres and turn on his color television. During the commercials, not a word about Empson or literary criticism, but a couple thousand and well-chosen words on the variety shows we'd been staring at through our cigar smoke. His comments were so sharp and to the point that at first I had the dreadful suspicion that he was toying with a comeback. But no, Monty had other irons in the fire.

I made what you might call the social error of inquiring after the progress of the Project. Monty replied by escorting me into his study and seating me in a leather armchair that felt as though it had been stuffed with oblong stones or back issues of the *National Geographic*. "You can stop worrying about that," he assured me. "I've outgrown it. Literary criticism, like poetry, is dead. It doesn't speak to people any more. All it does is provide a living, and not a very good one, for a set of misfits who pick over other people's leavings."

I pounded out my cigar on purpose in one of Estelle's cloisonné ashtrays that looked as though it had never been used before, and I said, "So you want to speak to people. How many?"

"As many as possible. I've gone into politics. I'm a Selectman now. Inside of two years I expect to run for Congress."

Monty stopped, apparently waiting for me to say something like "My God," or to jump up from the stony armchair and tip over Estelle's ashtray, but I took it straight, relaxed, and waited for him to go on. After all, I thought, with his voice, his money, and his nerve, what more did he need but ambition and patience?

Seated behind his teakwood desk with his fists on the hand-tooled Italian leather blotter set as though he was already in the governor's mansion, he started to hypnotize me all over again. "I've got the whole thing taped." How familiar that sounded! "Most politicians simply stumble through life from one campaign to the next, but I've made a careful study of the problem. At the same time I've been living out what I've learned on the local level—Cubmaster for a year, Toastmaster at the Father and Son Dinner, selfless service on the School Board, regular attendance at Board of Assessors meetings. There's no reason why I can't make it all the way, if I only remember the lesson I learned when I was the Singer from Outer Space."

I looked into his eyes. He wasn't young any more, but who is, except the kids who are always screaming for somebody like Monty Mars? Just the same, the fires of ambition were burning as strong as ever. Stronger, maybe, because now he was shooting the whole roll.

Monty opened his fists. "You can't expect to hold the confidence of the public, much less its affection, if you come to it with a superior attitude."

"In other words," I said, "don't bite the hand that feeds you."

"No, no," he replied impatiently. "That's too crass. Those of us who are superior, if we are, have to learn our lesson like babies: without the common people, where would we be? I'll tell you something else—love for the people isn't something you can put on like a costume. People like us have been cut off too long. We have to learn."

"And that's what you've been doing with yourself."

He smiled modestly. "It's been hard, but rewarding too. And thanks to the people I used to mock, I don't have any financial worries while I'm building a new career."

"Well kid," I said, "since that's what you're after, I hope you have them all yelling for you again, real soon."

That didn't go over too well, but still we parted friends, with Monty even promising to call me in on a consultant basis for the inevitable big-time campaigning. He ushered me out through the breezeway (one sprang up, freezing the sweat on my scalp, as though his kicking open the screendoor had actuated a wind

machine) along a petunia-bordered flagstone path to the broad blacktop driveway where my jalopy looked a little shabby, waiting to be taken away in the dark of night from before his vine-covered carport. Monty flicked on the three-way area light and stood hospitably until I had backed out of the winding drive, smiling at me, and waving farewell before he returned to the house.

If I close my eyes I can see him now on the trim dark lawn, bathed in two thousand candlepower of brilliant floodlights, superb as ever in his new costume of quietly tailored flannel, repp tie against soft white shirt, and highly polished black shoes, his hair no longer braided and greased, but neatly clipped and brushed back, his extraordinary voice temporarily silenced but his mouth still stretched in a smile that was no longer sardonic, but warm and sincere now, and his arm upraised in a stately gesture of farewell that bade me return one day and admire him as he would be once again, surrounded by a great throng for whose adoration he stood ready, there on the lawn, to cast aside every other thing he had once held dear and to dedicate all of his energy, shrewdness, and versatility, his very life itself, to winning and holding forever.

THE MOON ILLUSION

By JAMES L. MONTAGUE

Let's climb the hill beside the house tonight
And watch the moon rising behind dark trees
Turn them to silhouettes before it frees
Itself as an enormous disc of white.
We can stay on and watch how gain in height
Leads to a corresponding loss in size,
Or seems to be the illusion of the eyes
Called "moon illusion" by the erudite.
Or we can leave such wisdom to the wise,
Simply admire the way the blessed light
Holds back the dark; enjoy one more moonrise.
We shall have moonshadows to lead us back
The worn dirt path, by then a silver track.

The New Conservatism

ARCHIE J. BAHM

Viewed with eyes trained in the perspectives of the more radical twenties and thirties, the New Conservatism seems sinister and subversive—a surrender of a precious American heritage idealizing individualism, optimism, and a fighting spirit, a surrender which heralds a significant rejection of personal responsibility for the status of things. Although we have come to expect each generation to go, exasperatingly, “to the dogs,” this time a new radicalism has been defeated, not by a to-be-expected even greater radicalism, but by a new conservatism whose permanent importance is often obscured by its more obvious trends, such as soaring church memberships, indifference to politics, and especially defiant conformity. Hence the reversal of a centuries-old trend toward greater radicalism makes the present revolt-of-youth of more than usual significance. It marks a fundamental change in the direction of Western civilization, not only in morals but also in public morale.

The New Conservatism results from, and in turn reinforces, a long-range tendency. Inexorably each new generation becomes increasingly impressed with man's insignificance. Consequently each person has to adjust his conception of himself and his place in the scheme of things somewhat accordingly. Now, individualism, with its over-exaggerated emphasis upon the individual as an independent entity, no longer inspires great effort. The reasons for this tendency are many, some well-known, others not. Passing over, but not minimizing, the deep-rooted historical sources, such as the traditional theistic conception of man as a depraved sinner or the materialistic conclusion which dwarfed him to a “speck on a speck of stardust,” I shall focus on more recent developments. The intellectually alert already know about the social effects of population increase, industrialization, specialization, urbanization, and moral relativism. But the effects of these in producing the New Conservatism and its growing spirit of irresponsibility remain largely unexplored.

First, the philosophical effects of population pressure are discovered not so much from the parade of statistical information in social studies and Sunday supplements as from personal (or rather more impersonal) contact with people in greater numbers. Each of us now stands in more lines, is a member of larger audiences, studies in bigger classes, works for greater corporations, and joins more populous labor unions in expanding cities. Numbers replace our names more often—increasingly larger numbers—on army dog tags, licenses, factory badges, parking-lot tickets, social security and other insurance policies.

The psychological effect of such herding, despite some pride in belonging to bigger and bigger groups, is that each individual feels proportionately less significant. It follows automatically that if he is less significant he is less responsible. Each one not only intuitively senses the pettiness of his social role every time he is counted, but his minuteness is worn into him almost from birth, gradually, deeply, permanently. Once we recognize the current facts of life, we must wonder how it could be otherwise. Obviously the old enthusiasts of the twenties are now unrealistic, not the New Conservatives.

Consider the sacred privilege of voting. The New Conservative votes, but with somewhat less interest than can be aroused for almost any horse race. Why? In a presidential election your vote, as one among 60,000,000, counts as $1/60,000,000$ which, as anyone can see, is a practically infinitesimal amount—and this quite apart from the fact that the results, except for choosing between tweedledum and tweedle-dee, are already settled by party leaders. Stubborn zealots, especially if they show interest in other alternatives, risk being branded as subversives. With incentive gone, squeezed out of him by circumstances beyond his control, young Mr. Average Citizen grows indifferent to politics and to political freedom and responsibility. The periodically recurrent talk about extending the voting franchise to eighteen-year-olds is due for decline. Most of the support for it comes from oldsters of the twenties still dreaming of more vitality in politics; but they fail to realize that, except as inspired by still idealistic teachers (also hangovers from the twenties), more and more eighteen-year-olds have no great hankering for attaining an increasingly worthless privilege. The

great freedom won by our revolutionary forefathers has been lost progressively by population (and other) increases, with concomitant decline in the power of ideals of personal responsibility for human affairs. Old generations may protest, but they are helpless because already they have become a minority, fated to dwindle day by day.

The inspired make-the-world-safe-for-democracy slogan of World War I gave way in World War II to "We've got a job to do; let's get it over with." Indifference replaced idealism. What now? Will each individual count for even less as the proportions of war increase? Formerly thousands of bullets were needed to kill one statistical man; now a single bomb obliterates millions. Even as an object for destruction each person becomes less significant. As hope for survival diminishes with the development of more-destructive weapons, we may rejoice that indifference has not yet given way to outright pessimism. The New Conservative shows little incentive to be a war-resister; if his war-preventive power corresponds to his president-elective power, his minute fraction entails, and inspires, only the tiniest sense of responsibility.

Industrialization promotes a comparable spirit of irresponsibility. Industrial growth involves its own progressive belittlement of the individual man. While the "cog in a machine" evolved into "an interchangeable part," his significance declined from "a badge number" to "a statistic." Growing awareness of being treated as a mere means to distant impersonal ends (a fractional difference in the ratio of annual earnings of a complex holding company in one year as compared with the next) engenders in the worker little motive for accepting unnecessary burdens. Even if he enjoys some of his colleagues and is provided with successful morale-building services—coffee-breaks and other fringe benefits—he must resist dehumanization by treating his job as a means to his other ends; and, of necessity, he should be willing to devote some energy to demanding shorter hours with more pay so he can seek his real goals elsewhere. Apart from the size of his paycheck, the industrial worker has little reason to enjoy a sense of dignity, except as he becomes an indispensable specialist. But specialization takes its own progressive toll in delimiting one's sense of responsibility.

The industrial worker realizes not only that his significance

appears as a dehumanized statistic but that what remains of his humanity is considered detrimental to industry. Alerted, he fights automation. But investment in "pure research" will undo him. For an example, I need merely observe that in my own home two roomers, paid by the U.S. Air Force Office of Scientific Research Conference on the Behavioral Sciences, investigate human factors in mechanical error. Now that we have perfected the push-button machine, but not the button-pusher, "pure research" is called upon to perfect, i.e., make machine-like (completely dehumanize?), the human instrument required to press the button. How can the ideal of eliminating individual and human factors entirely from industry inspire in any about-to-be-eliminated individual a sense of loyalty or responsibility?

Specialization, resulting from the growth in size and complexity of industry, science, and technology, produces its own effects upon human nature and current morality. The larger and more intricate the organization the more necessary it becomes to divide the labor, and responsibility, into smaller and smaller bits. Since, increasingly, a man's primary responsibilities tend to be limited to his specialty, the more specialized he becomes the more limited become his responsibilities. One may protest that each particular job also gains inner complexity and hence requires more skill and dutiful attention; but then it, in turn, breaks up into subspecialties, each demanding its own full-time skill and devotion with consequent further narrowing of one's range of duties. Gradually the general, over-all management goes begging or requires the services of new specialists whose functions are limited to administration or to some small phase of it.

In contemporary America, training in limiting responsibility begins early. The spirit of the elective system thwarts the desire for comprehensiveness in education. Each subject and, in larger schools, each teacher may require pupils to do things in specifically different ways—differences which, they soon learn, appear quite arbitrary. Fulfillment of the particular tasks assigned assures continuous passing from grade to grade. The pupil soon selects the easier subjects, leaving others aside because he feels no obligations relative to them.

The armed services affect one's sense of responsibility in much

the same way. Ask any soldier. Despite the excellent indoctrination and morale-building efforts of induction experts, a serviceman soon learns that his primary duties pertain largely to explicitly assigned tasks. Specialization has invaded the military, and the prevailing ideal seems to be that the better the service, the more specialists it supports.

Going from school or army to college, today's typical young man finds college instructors who not only do not understand, but feel no compunction to understand, each other. Graduation depends not upon achievement of moral stature or breadth of vision but on the accumulation of credits as directed by narrow specialists who, in moments of broadmindedness, insist that the whole world depends primarily upon their specialty. If one should happen to be inducted into the "brotherhood" of scientists, he discovers a god called "Objectivity" to whom obeisance must be complete. Accountability for personal judgment must bow to data (and now conclusions) issued by mechanical meters (for "if it can't be measured, it doesn't exist"). Thus, even science has been used to chasten and discourage current generations, and so serves as a cause of the New Conservatism. If univacs can do our thinking for us, why take on responsibility for thinking?

Then when one graduates to a job, apprenticeship requires him to learn bit by bit and to acquire responsibility little by little. But in the process, his already-acquired tendency to accept only limited responsibility is rutted still more deeply into his hardening habits.

Thus one general net result of current acculturation is the growth of another idea of freedom—freedom from responsibility. A man has none except what he freely chooses to accept, and the less he accepts, the fewer duties he has. "I'll do my job, and no more." "More" means meddling, and meddling means trouble.

The New Conservatism is a product, finally, of those forces which brought about urbanization and moral relativism. These are not new. But continuing acceleration of urbanizing and world-shrinking trends and the universality of naively acclaimed relativism, added to the cumulative effects of population pressure, industrialization, and specialization, have contributed to making the New Conservatism something different in kind.

The sky-is-the-limit hope of the twenties has lost its power. High

school graduation autograph-and-good-luck-wishes once were accompanied by a commonplace slogan: "There's always room for a *better* man at the top." This has disappeared from currency. "Why?" I asked a group of recent graduates gathered in my home. "What has replaced it?" A moment's reflection brought forth the reply: "There's always room for *another* man at the top." The idea that peak positions are available only to those who excel and that excellence is possible and desirable no longer inspires. Corporation pyramids have now mounted so high that the pinnacle has receded from sight. The New Conservatives are realistic: they know that they can't all become President of the United States.

The New Conservative is also not easily shocked by novelties. After decades of "supercolossal" extravaganzas, the present generation is bored with efforts to excite interest. Mass media distribution of variations on sex, crime, and science fiction leave little to imagination—people now have even their imagining done for them by experts. When all stranger-than-fiction truths have been dramatized by "Believe it or not" and the latest news is presented every-hour-on-the hour, people become immune to wonder.

Few avenues remain for exploitation by professional attention-getters. Two appear now popularly effective: the absurd and the reactionary.

But even the absurd is already commonplace. The \$64 Question, replaced quickly by the \$6,400 and the \$64,000 Question, readies our expectations for a \$64,000,000 Question. All of these sums, of course, represent the something-for-nothing spirit. The New Conservative has been trained to expect something for nothing—at least a little something, even if what and how much must be decided by luck and local mores. Why shouldn't he? After all, his present rich civilization has been served up to him without his asking for it. Nor can he honestly regard himself as responsible for its continuance. Astronomical public debts, which he did not incur and for which he cannot pay, continue to increase by acts of professional congressmen over whom he has but infinitesimal control. He is being given a free ride on an inflation escalator with no top flight in sight. He was trained, during the first two decades of his life, not to work. He has been expected to do little more than to enjoy school (where everybody passes) and movies (double-

features) and TV (where the only cost consists in optional listening to commercials) and to keep out of trouble. Anyone who does more than is required is, indeed, an oddity. Except in driver-training programs, where his own life obviously is at stake, where does he receive any serious incentive for idealizing self-imposed responsibility? That anyone should expect the New Conservative to measure up, or down, to the pattern of the wildly idealistic twenties is itself absurd; but having absurd elders does not greatly disturb him either unless they become too demanding.

The reactionary approach to interest-appeal also flows naturally from conditions of our time. The only genuine way now for youth to revolt against elders idealizing responsible radicalism is to become irresponsibly conservative. The more vigorous the revolt, the more shockingly conservative one must appear. Sack suits are symptomatic. Nudity still startles some, but its attention-attracting power has waned somewhat. Those old enough to remember when an exposed ankle was sex stimulating can hardly be expected to understand a generation bored with burlesque and bathing briefs. Artists, having long since gone completely non-objective, should find the *avant-garde* of the present generation again employing nude models—for the purpose of demonstrating their courage to be reactionary.

The much-remarked-about conformity reflects recognition that standing out from the crowd (after stand-outishness had itself become a crowd phenomenon) requires means beyond the reach of ordinary persons. In seeking his own specialized niche, one now knows that his excellence, if any, can be recognized by only a limited audience; his reputation and security are bound up with his specialty. In all other areas he has little alternative but to take the easy way out: to conform.

Increased church memberships may signify a growing awareness of the world's too-bigness, but perhaps more as a reflection of new feelings of insignificance than of a revival of faith in traditional doctrines. Religion, confined largely to church and Sunday, is now a specialty. Thinking things through for oneself has become progressively impossible, for each new contribution to scholarship complicates rather than clarifies issues. The "master-of-my-fate" ideal no longer appeals to a radio and TV brainwashed generation

which has discovered that the job of arranging one's own intellect annoyingly distracts from the more urgent business of keeping up-to-date with new details in his all-important specialty.

Whether or not church membership now signifies a retreat from thinking things through for oneself, church management involves its own battery of trained specialists and the churchgoer is inclined to let them perform their specialized functions for him just as he expects them to call upon him to provide his specialized services for them. Little occasion for serious questioning occurs, except where some aspect of the church-management complex (such as sound equipment or bookkeeping machines) overlaps with a member's area of competence. The New Conservative spirit of accepting divided and limited responsibility leads naturally to assent to the specialized authority of ecclesiastical officials in the same way as to the authority of other specialists. Hence conformity in matters of religion is not merely apparent but real, even though for somewhat different reasons.

Regarding politics, the New Conservative has little reason to support either reform or the status quo. He feels no personal call to shoulder responsibility for the world's ills, for he is acquainted with the facts that two World Wars have brought us not peace as promised but, via "brinkmanship," to the verge of a greater third war and that our fate is held in the hands of another group of authoritative specialists, politicians and statesmen, whose professional services we must accept as helplessly as those of others.

To urge, as I do, that we should be alarmed about dangers inherent in the new spirit of irresponsibility will not impress the New Conservative. To him such alarm implies desire to assume responsibility beyond reasonable and realistic limits as seen in the light of the causes here outlined. He can merely shrug his shoulder and smile with amusement at how persistently earlier indiscrete idealism continues to infect declining oldsters.

However, lest I appear to be advocating abandonment of all hope for perpetuating ideals of individual significance, optimism regarding new stages of progress, and responsibility for vigorous support of general morale, I shall not close this article without a glimpse beyond the gloom. Fairness requires recognition of the genuine virtues of the current trend and an awareness of the possi-

bilities regarding modulation and partial reversal of this trend, which is really a good, not an evil, one. It only seems sinister to those who do not yet understand and appreciate it.

Limitation is not elimination of responsibility. Focusing responsibility within a specialty makes it definite rather than vague. Division of labor is good here as well as elsewhere. The grandiose ideals of the twenties were really illusions and Western man is now becoming sober after his wild idealistic jag.

If the individual is really insignificant, quantitatively, what harm can come from the realistic recognition of the fact? Misconceived egocentricity should be eliminated. Recognition and appreciation of the unique and ultimate value of an individual does not depend upon an exaggerated philosophy of individualism. Cosmopolitan interdependence is a fact; so recognition of the nature and significance of one's self in terms of its unique organic role within the rich and complex range of actualities need not diminish but may, and should, enhance the stature of a person—especially one who willingly seeks and bears organic responsibility. Formerly, those who felt responsible for the world's ills but never got around to doing anything about them had only a fictitious responsibility and significance anyway.

Willingness to delegate responsibility for public welfare to a few specialists is a virtue, not a vice. Too many cooks spoil the soup; when everyone believes he has a right and duty to manage the affairs of mankind, chaos results. If the New Conservatism involves a genuine willingness to delegate power, as well as duty and responsibility, to experts, then mankind may be approaching, for the first time perhaps, a situation making intelligent solution of its common political, economic, and cultural problems possible.

Also a modulation, and even reversal, of current trends is to be expected eventually. First of all, we should keep in mind that nature embodies a general tendency to reverse itself whenever destruction threatens from pursuing any direction to its extreme. Decline in a personal sense of responsibility, self-respect, and significance can hardly degenerate to zero. (The description of a Beatnik as "one who is on the bottom looking down" obviously passes as a ludicrous joke.) Surely we can trust nature's providential pendulum (or spiral), which has now turned a persisting demand

for ever greater radicalism into a new conservatism, to turn back any trend toward extreme conservatism which becomes, and makes mankind, too absurd.

Reaction to the evils of increasing specialism has already appeared. Universities, which earlier adopted elective systems to throw off the formalistic strait jacket of a curriculum seeming to be centered about requiring the dead Latin language, now struggle against the excesses of electivism. Employers of more highly trained specialists increasingly demand that technical institutes provide candidates with some cultural perspective. Humanities courses tailored to fit the needs of technical curricula were taken from the hands of professional humanists when, and because, they themselves had become too specialized in their own narrowing fields. An urge to resist the evils of specialism is evident to those who care to look for it.

New conceptions of the nature of personality and of individual significance, and formulation of these as inspiring ideals, must be expected. We still eulogize the rugged individualism of the pioneer and the erratic individualism of the twenties. These philosophies constitute persisting elements in our cultural heritage. But we do not find them vitally significant in a period of increasingly interdependent specialization. The contemporary and future urban situation requires an organic individualism—a philosophy recognizing the need for and the naturalness of dynamic integration of a variegated complex of specialized institutions into each unique personality. Individuality is not antagonistic to its causes and conditions.

The growing intricateness of personality also entails possibilities for greater uniqueness. A responsive self projects octopus-like, multi-dimensional cultural tentacles which intermingle interdependently with both similar and contrasting extensions of other personalities. Recognition that the older doctrines—"soul is simple" and "a man's home is his castle"—have become inadequate does not imply, as mistaken critics infer, abandonment of the ideals of the uniqueness of each individual. The magnificent riches provided by multitudes of specialties from which a person can draw ingredients for his own unique character may so dazzle weaker eyes trained to see self through more simple-minded cultural spec-

tacles. But personalities nurtured within an organic cosmopolis hear about, but no longer understand, ideals of isolated individuality. Organically nurtured persons intuitively sense a need for organic conceptions of responsibility, and if the contemporary trend toward assuming only limited responsibility appears depressing to oldsters, we should remember that the willingness to accept the authority of other specialists is a part of an organic response. Any ineptitude on the part of an older generation of teachers to comprehend what is happening and any dismay at what is mistaken as sinister subversion of inspiring ideals should disappear as a new generation of teachers emerges.

Not to be overlooked in the evolution of organic ideals is an expanding role of Oriental influences. The growing willingness of the New Conservative to accept the authority of specialists outside his field may fit him for easier integration of his ideals with those of Orientals trained for centuries, more maturely, to be willing to accept things as they are going to be. And the increasing pliability of the extending multi-dimensional personality may ease the way to a more intricate intermingling of personalities on a world-wide scale. These two together, growing willingness and increasing pliability, should provide coming generations with better preparation for world cultural citizenship than the sky-is-the-limit idealism of the twenties. I choose to see the New Conservatism as symptomatic of widespread preparation for still newer organic ideals of individuality.

WATCHING THE SHEEP (MARCELLUS)

By J. V. CROWLEY

Watching the sheep in the burying ground,
Almost a park it is,
Filled with the easy wish:
'God Is Love' or 'Asleep In The Arms Of Jesus.'
The perpetual wish, cut in slate,
Weathered smooth by other falls,
Fading to blankness.

The sheep walk over.
Evening clouds an ultimate meaning.
Shadows slant on turning grass.
Sentiment could mistake a meaning,
Quick bestow a sigh.
'Prepare To Meet Thy God.'
Admonish me,
Full in the bosom of this life.

A lesson in coincidence, birth and death,
Or in the ninety years,
Or in the twenty days?
A moral in the irony or plan?
Did he ordain or does he regard?

It is a ruse, nothing more,
Not proof or passion.
Imagination sees the skull,
Sees the marrow, core of the sumac.
'Death Is Life' and 'Living Is Death.'
Not a picture, not a greening sight
Though lacking the Plantin charnel house.

Life among the intellectuals

JACK GARLINGTON

I've been living among the intellectuals now for ten years, and I've come back to tell you all, to tell you all.

I wasn't born there—few of us are—but in an area of Texas that was completely devoid of intellectuals. (I understand a couple have been imported since.) And I spent my teens and twenties in the middle of the Great American Bourgeoisie, whence I journeyed into the army. So it is apparent that I entered the world of the mind at a late age and with no advance preparation, and like one who was first deflowered at forty I can give to the shock and thrill of the experience testimony made more complete by maturity.

But a word of warning first. The burden of most *National Geographic* tours is the exoticism of the land which is toured. The writer revels in differences: how the natives drink kvass instead of Folger's, are tattooed instead of circumcised, blacken their teeth instead of reddening the lips. It's the strangeness that excites, and we glory in the unusual. But I'm afraid my account will differ, for I haven't brought back from Intellectual-land a sense of disparity, but its very opposite. "Good Lord," as the corporal wrote from New Guinea, "it's just like Brooklyn."

Now the corporal's report mustn't be taken literally, of course. We all know that New Guinea has trees that don't grow in Brooklyn and that mountains hang on the horizon of the one and the canyons of Wall Street on the horizon of the other. What the corporal meant, of course, was that the heart and core of daily life—the men, the mess, the company clerks, socks and shoes and dull subordination—were the same in both.

For certainly the world the intellectual lives in *looks* different: the walls hold Utrillos rather than views of Yellowstone; the books are newer and the cars older; the lamp is a Calder mobile, rather than a Nubian girl who is rather long in the flank. And thousands of years hence, when archaeologists are going through the ruins, they'll be able to separate the kitchen middens of the bourgeoisie

from those of the intelligentsia by the total absence, in the latter, of bridge-decks or china match-holders inscribed "Souvenir of Salt Lake City." Moreover, if the shape of the house is apparent, they'll see that the intellectual was missing a picture window.

Before proceeding further I must warn of another difference between my account and the *National Geographic's*. The natives in the *National Geographic* never think they're different. Indeed, to them the author and the photographer are strange and eccentric, and if in their pictures the natives are almost always wearing an embarrassed smile, it clearly derives not from their loincloths or the angularity of their dance-steps but from watching someone else make a fool of himself. They're embarrassed for the visitors. Imagine, in our society, how we'd regard a foreigner who asked us to pose with the lawn mower, or the expression we'd register when asked to be photographed over a plate of sauerkraut or baked beans.

But the natives of Intellectual-land feel they're different from the bourgeois dullards in their midst. Whereas the native of New Guinea is hardly aware of the outside world—he's heard of it, but that's about all—the intellectual's awareness of the bourgeois world is pervasive and undying. For the intellectual is not a native but a migrant; he wasn't born in his land but came in as a wetback during his sophomore year. Thus he resembles some of the Europeans we had in the United States around the turn of the century: people who fled the old country because of its poverty and disease and who were so startled at their new condition that they were considerably more chauvinistic than the native-born Americans.

So the *National Geographic* account will differ from mine on two points: in the former the natives are different but think they aren't; in mine the intellectuals aren't different but think they are. Let me give examples.

Both the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie think they are the last remnants of the Chosen People. I remember, when I lived among the bourgeoisie, how foolish we thought everybody else, and how unfortunate it must be to be born a Jew, Negro, foreigner, easterner, or artist. These outcasts were both pitiable and deplorable, and they spoke English with an accent. Moreover their dress and their houses were peculiar: *we* knew how silly it was to wear

a beret, for instance—it didn't keep the wind out, but merely showed up the knobs on the head—just as it was absurd to live in an old house where, thanks to the vagaries of the plumbing, the dishwater revisited the sink in the middle of the morning. At the same time we failed to note that some of our own customs were illogical: just why we should burden ourselves with a new-car debt every other year, when the car itself was hardly back from its maiden voyage, never struck us as odd.

Now at first thought one might expect the intellectuals to differ here. They are great on ethical considerations, which minimize mere physical difference and in case of doubt sin on the side of tolerance. But the expected difference doesn't appear: the intellectuals think themselves the Chosen People too. There is the same hostility toward the foreigner (the bourgeois, the naive, the unbookful), and the reasons given are equally ingenuous. A beret, an intellectual might point out, is fully as warm as a hat, and has the distinction of being individual: there is virtue in the fact that one's knobs *do* show through. And there's nothing wrong with an old house; nobody builds high ceilings any longer, and to get one we should certainly be willing to cope with the dishwater on its mid-morning return. In fact the intellectuals, like good generals, don't merely stay on the defensive; they attack. What, for instance, is so good about hats? Aren't they all the same—mass-produced, machine-made, devoid of personality? And what about new houses? Aren't they just like the hats—a sign of the debasement of the bourgeoisie?

This difference—the attitude toward individuality—is a dogmatic crux between the two tribes. The bourgeoisie distrusts individuality; its members like things predictable, planned, standard—no dark corners. An erudite word in the conversation arouses a smoky hostility; an eccentric taste brings up suspicion. The intellectual, on the other hand, worships individuality—worships individuality so uniformly, in fact, that one who questioned its efficacy might well find himself expelled from the tribe. An intellectual with a picture window is suspect even if he has a picture to window. An intellectual may skim an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* but must not read the same article when it is boiled down for the *Reader's Digest*. In my travels from intellectual enclave to intel-

lectual enclave I have always found a Picasso clown over the mantel, just as the bourgeois home always has the view of Yellowstone or a rose-covered cottage in mother-of-pearl.

Now the reader may wonder at this apparent contradiction in the intellectuals' behavior: it seems Philistine to state a principle and violate it yourself—and the only explanation I can give is that individuality is a principle which the intellectuals *profess* but which the bourgeois never considers at all. And this brings up an interesting question of value: is it better to be advanced enough to see a principle and violate it or never to see the principle at all? But at this point we're in the realm of the intellect, and we're having enough trouble there already.

Now not only do the intellectuals insist on homogeneity over their mantels and in their magazine racks, but in their thoughts as well. I knew an intellectual Republican once . . . he disappeared from sight years ago. An intellectual who goes to the Methodist or Baptist church is as lonely as a bourgeois who goes to the Unitarian. A few years ago one couldn't mention Marilyn Monroe without derision; then she crossed the border and married Arthur Miller, and now the climate of opinion is swept by murky currents. The two tribes mark out public figures and haul them into their camp: the intellectuals have Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo, the Marx brothers, Charlie Chaplin and Adlai Stevenson, while the bourgeoisie has Jane Russell, Esther Williams, Alan Ladd, Jackie Gleason, and all the Eisenhowers. The bourgeoisie has a short memory, and it's often possible for an issue or a figure to be dropped, at which point it may be picked up by the intellectuals: thirty years ago jazz belonged to the bourgeoisie, while the intellectuals thought it about as significant as the yo-yo; now the intellectuals have it and the bourgeoisie has advanced to rock 'n' roll.

In general the intellectuals have the better system of communication: certain intellectual muezzins call the faithful to prayer. Thus at any moment one knows where he is in the intellectual world: If the literary quarterlies take up Writer X his books are immediately bought by the university libraries. If they don't, one neither reads nor mentions him, or if it's necessary to introduce his name into a conversation, one prefaces it with a disclaimer, rather as a devout Catholic might cross himself before mentioning the devil.

In the bourgeois world, conversely, one is less sure where he stands—for the bourgeoisie walk about with their eyes on the ground and their ears to the radio, and never hear the muezzin at all. Consequently—like a soldier during the war who mischievously inserted a picture of Hitler into his identification card—an intellectual can bring up the most heretical figures without arousing suspicion. This isn't a procedure I'd advise, certainly; for just as occasionally the guards at the MP gate did check the ID cards, so a bourgeois will occasionally read the book mentioned . . . and then there's muck all over the place.

With the intellectual too, some of the attitudes tend to be GI: group-issue, in this case. The better intellectuals escape, but there's always a pressure to be conversationally standard. The sins of the bourgeoisie, the crassness of our age, the absurdity of conventional religion, the sameness of the suburbs—these and other topics come ready-made; and while an intellectual may demur, he finds that for his independence of mind he has drawn on himself the burden of proof.

Now many of the intellectuals' predispositions have logic on their side, but not all of them do. Sometimes the intellectual grows so infatuated with a principle that his enthusiasm sweeps him past all objections. Not long ago there came into the intellectual world a certain type of chair which sacked the occupant up, as it were: it enveloped him, and left the arms and legs hanging out, so that he resembled a squid in flight. Now at various parties during my stay among the intellectuals I observed a peculiar shuffling about for position at the beginning of the evening. The guests who arrived first got the best seats, where they could move about, cross and uncross their legs, and set their cocktails down without an expulsive movement rather like coming out of a cocoon. The last guest always had to take the envelope, of course, and—here's the strange part—not only did he never have the audacity to ask for a chair but, whether out of cowardice or consideration for the hostess, he never referred to his unfortunate plight at any point during the evening. In fact, if the conversation ever turned to furniture and thus left him a blazing opportunity to bare his testimony, he ignored the chance and instead attacked the standardized, machine-made chairs found in the bourgeois home—which, it might be

argued, had the aesthetic advantage of hiding the sitter's backside from the audience and also left him in possession of his freedom.

Another similarity in the two worlds is that, in the religious rites of both, sacrifices are made to a number of rather dark gods. Both tribes worship some figures they don't clearly see. The bourgeoisie adores the family, for instance, despite the fact that it often becomes a rather dismal icon. They revere the extremely young and the extremely old, even though living examples in the home may be either insolent or cantankerous; and while they haven't much idea what they mean by God they won't stand anyone's pointing the fact out. And one of the largest figures in the bourgeois pantheon is what the intellectuals derisively term the Bitch Goddess Success, who may be envisioned as a large gaudy figure with a lapful of Cadillacs and a halo of advertising slogans.

Now the Zeus of the intellectual Olympus is not Success but Culture. Like the Hindu Siva she has a multitude of hands, most of which hold books, record-players, or abstract paintings. She dies and is reborn every decade or so, and each reincarnation stalks in with a different group of impedimenta. The nineteenth century avatar, for instance, held the Bible—the contemporary goddess has dropped it and holds, instead, a volume entitled "The Bible as Literature." And each re-embodiment sits in a different light: around many of the past figures there shone—even through the darkness of ignorances—a mist of humility and brotherly love, while the modern goddess sits in a bright red, culturally advanced, up-to-the-minute glare, of which the devotees are quite proud. And the intellectuals chant hymns expressing their pride: pride in better taste, in wider reading, in deeper education. They are missionaries, of course, as devotees always are, but missionaries of a strange cast. They seem only to proselytize each other; indeed their contempt for the bourgeoisie is so great that they withdraw from contact; and it apparently never strikes them, as it does an outsider, that if they wanted the bourgeoisie to accept their tenets, it would be more practical to get out among the bourgeoisie and tell them so.

But even with these liabilities, one is forced to admit, at the end of his stay among the intellectuals, that their world is physically the prettier. Even though their houses and clothes are standard-

ized, they're cut from a prettier pattern: an Utrillo *does* stay interesting longer than a view of Yellowstone. And there's excitement in their world. While they are faddish and tend to sit with their noses in the wind, at least there's the frequent thrill of new ideas and new sensations. And it seems true, as they claim, that the record of their victories is impressive: though a tiny group, and one that always loses the initial battle, they always triumph at the end. And, as they point out, their triumphs have helped not only themselves but their enemies: the bourgeois woman can now leave the house, can vote, can work; the bourgeois man gets a higher wage, has a prettier house, can buy more books; the bourgeois children have a better education ahead—most of this through intellectual efforts.

So it would seem that anyone visiting the intellectual world would, like Iowans in California, never leave it again.

But unfortunately one does leave. One finds he can't stay there forever, for unless he is alert a strange atrophy sets in. Just as many of the bourgeois grow dull and heavy without some wind from the intellectual world, so many of the intellectuals, cut off from the bourgeoisie, grow strange and oblique: their limbs wither and their voices change, and they become as stylized as a Byzantine saint in a church in Ravenna.

So the visitor departs. Of course he finds that the bourgeois world has been ruined too—he can't live *there* either—but all during his stay among the intellectuals a tiny piercing signal warns him away. Under and through the beauty and excitement and jubilation of the intellectual there repeatedly comes one small, almost subliminal glow of scarlet that spoils the whole effect. Like the certain slant of light in Emily Dickinson's poem, there is something that oppresses, something that makes "internal difference/Where the meanings are." It hangs around their clothes, their books, their parties, their art.

It's the reddish glow about the goddess Culture, the glare that reminds one of pride.

EVENING IN THE TOWN

By VERN RUTSALA

The blue haze from all-day fires
in frowsy beds of blond weeds
now settles cautiously in the tops
of summer's brittle, rusted trees.
The town's few street lamps flicker
signals to early insects and blink like candles
in the fuzzy light—buoys for the creeks
of roads, their tarred poles bases
for children's twilight games.
A punchy sun laces the clouds
with flurries of color and falls
sizzling in snow on a distant mountain.
And throughout the powdered town all sports
of eyes become games of stealth and ears
as pulsing insects buzz their reveries.
Trees flourish, grow green again
in the coming darkness. Parents'
voices plead from pools of shade
seeking children hidden in the closets
of marauding night. Cigarettes
rock slowly on wicker porches.
Amber windows gutter dully to cut
the suede chill of falling night.

Language adjustment

THOMAS O. BRANDT

In this age of mass organization and mass communication we are trying to design a style of language capable of reaching anyone who can read or hear. The greatest mistake in such an attempt is the display of an individual style unless it is gleaned from the "common" man, whereby we note that "common" has two distinct though somewhat interrelated meanings. In other words, we aim at a mediocre or low intelligence which we flatter to be sophisticated by endowing our communications stylistically with subjective objectivity, condescending humility, polished ruggedness, and a reverberating integrity. Words and phrases are divested of their essential meaning and rearranged to such patterns that they express something entirely different from what they actually say.

This deliberate abuse of the American language issues from an unwillingness to subscribe to any definite linguistic status or standard. The American language is pliable to an incredible degree because of its uninhibited use; it is elusive and elastic, so much so that foreigners find it the easiest language to learn and the most difficult to command.

Aspiring to a periscopic modesty and a depersonalized individuality, many Americans will exercise great care not to appear superior to their neighbors out of a mistaken notion of democracy. The result is the applied law of mass gravity. Being afraid of speaking down to their fellowmen, they will take an immediate shortcut and establish themselves linguistically at a lower level at once. And they will strive to ennoble the mistakes of the uneducated by saying "there is two sides to this matter," or "got beat," or "everybody should mind their business," etc.

Nothing gives us so perfectly away as language. It is the only known means by which we can coherently think and draw logical conclusions. The American language, in constant flux, is in a course of rapid development—considering the slow pace languages in general observe. Its formation and advancement does not pro-

ceed without trials and tribulations. It can be most beautiful as Jefferson and Lincoln, and the works of Sherwood Anderson, Thomas Wolfe, and Hemingway have shown. But more and more we avail ourselves of a technical language, apparent for example in David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*: "We must study not only the individual but the gear box which, with various slips and reversals, ties behavior in with institutional forms." We take a hint from business and industry and "sell an idea," "offer a resolution," "contact people," "are at service," and become "products of a college." The language of mass media, after having climbed down to the bottom of the masses to ingratiate itself and to prepare the market for mass circulation, rises again and creates an honest impression in the *Reader's Digest* or a sophisticated air in *Life* and particularly in *Time*, which—adjusting facts to the level of the consumer—behaves as if it had been in the harbor of Providence since time began.

The monotony of the average prefers the passive voice ("Your letter has been received," "It is being felt")—or a passive attitude ("I see no reason why this should not be done")—or tunes everything down and considers itself the more objective the more impersonal it is. There is a great though concealed insistence by the speaker himself that he be as inconspicuous as possible so as not to offend those whose intellect is not their strongest feature. He will be careful not to avail himself of metaphors unless they are taken from the realm of business, technology, or popular science; he will usually start a speech with an anecdote or a joke whose favorite target he is himself to refute any notion in advance that he might be endowed with greater intellectual capacity than his listeners. Out of a supposed modesty he will say "I feel" where he should say "I think" or "I believe," and he will be anxious to hide any emotion no matter how appropriate and justified it may be, for "emotional" in this country has become a synonym for "unbalanced," that is, "maladjusted." In no other country are the poets of less concern to the people than in America.

To make up for this modesty and lack of originality the well-adjusted person will, on assorted occasions, indulge in devastating superlatives and pretend to admire matters that are "different." So great is his effort to convince others that "different" things are

"exciting" that these same different and exciting things will be accepted by a multitude of persons who, of course, will adjust them as rapidly as possible to a new norm. The salesman will say, "It's different. We sell lots of it."

Competing for attention the average man will trade essence and quality for frequency and intensity and use absolute superlatives abundantly whether they are built-in adjectives ("tremendous," "terrific," "brilliant") or comparisons of adjectives in the third degree. They are so much used and abused that writers and announcers slide into a barrage of double superlatives until an innocuous invitation to subscribe to a magazine contains no less than twenty to thirty superlatives. Such usage is commensurate with a preference for appealing to man's desire for sensation not his judgment.

With our predilection for keeping everything smiling and in harmony it is no surprise that the word "fun" has attained rare prominence. Rearing children, reading, picnics, company, work, thinking, music, worshipping together—all are "fun." This word is subject to such diversified interpretation that it is essentially meaningless. The same can be said about "happy," which only in comparatively few instances signifies what it professes; most frequently it means "ready" ("happy to answer your letter"), "satisfied," "pleased," "glad." Something similar we notice with the word "love." We love God, a woman, a book, swimming, fun, and cheese. The three steps, to like, to be fond of, and to love, have been flattened into one convenient form.

At first glance it seems to be paradoxical that the use of the first person pronoun singular, so severely suppressed in personal letters, is favored in circular letters and printed communications. All of us are receiving such circular letters from finance companies whose presidents ask our indulgence for writing "personal" letters conceived in the spirit of enthusiasm for our convenience and welfare. We realize, of course, that these electro-typed or printed letters in "I" form have been deprived of any privacy, just as a round-robin letter is a meaningless convenience that states facts and feelings conforming to a general norm, applicable in any average situation. The adjusted man expresses himself in an adjusted language which has lost its identity.

A retirement into general expressions is at the same time a retirement from ourselves. It is not very admirable that we feel secure in such generalities, "secure" being a favorite word today and meaning "imperturbably poised." After all, only the gods and the dead are secure. It is this "You know what I mean" and "I am just an average citizen" attitude that makes for stereotype phrases consisting almost exclusively of formulae and easily comprehensible patterns. Now, to attain a certain position of respectability (attainable by anyone) the "educated" man will try to distinguish himself by aiming at sophistication. He is taking a matter "under advisement," he "places stress on a point," he will "give thought to an idea" (a rather charming picture), a fact "escaped his attention" (though it never may have reached his mind). He will speak of his "philosophy" where he merely means thought, view, or opinion without engaging in a "love for wisdom." "Prior" sounds more learned to him than "before," for he aspires to a scholarly language, superior and a bit flippant, and the result is a strange jargon, noted by H. L. Mencken: Custodian Engineer, Educational Engineer, Aesthetic Engineer, Odor Engineer, Sales Engineer, Touchdown Engineer.

While trimming up the ego of his listener or his reader, he will be careful to keep his addressee on the leash within easy reach. Speedily he will crash through all personal barriers and land within seconds at the first name of the man he has just been introduced to. This goes so far that he will be able to give the first names of his "good" friends quite easily but he will excuse himself for not knowing their surnames on the grounds of being intimately acquainted with them. Nowadays everybody is a "friend" so that this word has become an empty shell. The saleslady will alternate "Madam" with "Honey" and "Dear." Actually, to address a man as "Mister" and add his last name is a sign of coolness, just as "My dear Mr. Smith" is more chilly than "Dear Mr. Smith."

The fields where the decline of inner form and language are most noticeable are, of course, advertising, radio, television, and the movies. In order to arouse attention, agents and announcers will not recoil from the most blatant exaggeration which—however "hot" it may be—must be presented in a "cool" manner. Their horrifying English stems from the desire to be understood by every-

body, and since the uneducated are the least critical, they are the most easily overcome. One step removed, but not higher, are speeches and announcements which start out in a jovial manner, assert that all of us are human beings striving for the better, and then, in the midst of their "message" insert sophisticated or technical terms which still can be vaguely understood by the naive. To this category belong references of conversationalists who will say "as you so aptly put it," whereas the recipient of this compliment has put nothing except perhaps his tongue into his cheek. As a rule, however, the target man will willingly identify himself with the unidentifiable. He will be reverent upon learning that a certain automobile (so excellent as to be beyond comparison) is endowed with all kinds of "appointments," "irregardless" of any other brand, and he himself will "use" occasionally pseudo-sophisticated language which—if nothing else—will bring him into logical trouble.

By dint of his incessant one-ear listening and his newspaper and magazine reading (which bathe his eyes with a soothing film of political events, distant tragedies, meaningless sensations, enraptured advertisements, and plain chatter), he acquires a hodgepodge of expressions. His partner-in-Babel pretends to understand him, which is all that matters. He would be utterly dumbfounded or annoyed if somebody told him that language has creative and magic values. He uses it like knife and fork, as something which is not directly associated with him. Rhetoric cares more for fluency than for precision, more for smoothness than for beauty, and this, in turn, is expressed in the voice of the speaker.

We are told from our childhood that one of the greatest virtues men can acquire is the ability of getting along with each other. We are not equally encouraged to get along with ourselves. In most instances language will suffer severely because it will try to adjust itself to a usage as practiced by the majority. We can see this quite clearly in our public schools where the intellectually outstanding student is suspect not only by pupils but by counselors as well. Individual traits are considered to be disturbing; a developed and beautiful way of expression taxes too much the comprehension and the comfort of the common man. Carelessness is the hallmark of the adjusted language. There are islands of childhood tradition of

which radio commentators avail themselves benignly ("Remember when . . .," "Those were the days . . ."), meaningless words like "well," "interesting," "privilege," "pleasure," "integrity" when speaking of art; these pass readily since no other language has so many acoustical illusions as the American. A word actually attains significance or meaning only in a given word environment. Such exercise is more easily spoken than written since word intonation, vocal emphasis, pauses, and gestures come into play.

The average conversation is so limited and stereotyped that by its noncommittal tenor it must remain more or less indifferent and evoke an impression of permanent satisfaction. The carelessly placed frequency of phrases, idioms, words, exclamations, etc. is striking: "supposed to," "glad to," "will check," "good to see you," "had a good time," "wonderful," "give me a ring," "nice day," "am afraid so," "awfully nice," "be good," "God bless you." They permeate our radio programs; they pervade our newspapers and magazines like the *Reader's Digest*, which in its very title indicates that it has taken upon itself the difficult task of editing man's mind. This linguistically precision-oiled periodical is a predigested dream of an ideal way of life adjusted to the vague notions of the average man who, in turn, is adjusted to this adjusted dream. It is a perfect "virtuous" circle which makes everybody "happy."

There is an almost messianic tendency to keep everybody informed about everything. This trend is a shallow reflection of the Period of Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and is aimed at the greatest possible multitude of men. The means by which its realization is envisaged is education. Such education is required to be realistic and pragmatic. Here the pursuit of truth and knowledge takes place in the realm of the concrete, not necessarily in that of thinking. The urge to render everything comprehensible and explicable imbues our language with smooth and "low brow" sentences and has in its wake more discussion than study, more consideration for the learner than for thought. Consequently, the target is always within comparatively easy reach. Once it has been attained, a new target is established. There is, of course, nothing wrong with such a method provided the target is not held too close to the face of the person subjected to this procedure. Such spacing, however, is rare and frequently considered to be undemocratic.

During the process of "enlightenment," which sees the epitome of wisdom in a perambulating encyclopedia and which recognizes facts as truth without further investigating them, language and meaning are adjusted to the beneficiary. Comic strips, for instance, have a major "educational" function, even a religious one, as illustrations of this kind pertaining to the Bible bear out. One is reminded of medieval illustrations when the general public was unable to read, and one wonders whether much has changed since that time except the acquisition of a visual skill. Reading as an art has certainly become problematic. Condensed books, excerpts, abstracts, speed reading, outlines are hardly witnesses to the contrary. Television, spellbinding and immobilizing, suggesting a variety of shortcuts to the intellectual labors of man, attempts to advance our passive reception by refuting our imagination and making contemplation superfluous. It gives the public what it wants and the public preferably wants action in pictures.

The decline of language as an art is further evidenced by our increasing inability in letter writing, by the fragmentary character of our conversation (for which the cocktail party is a telling common denominator), and by our impatience with form. In his *Democracy in America* Tocqueville speaks of men who "do not readily comprehend the utility of forms: they feel an instinctive contempt for them . . . as they commonly aspire to none but easy and present gratifications, they rush onward to the object of their desires, and the slightest delay exasperates them." Our linguistic adjustment has reached the consumer level whose norm is the idiom of the salesman.

In order to appreciate and to evaluate a thing we have to compare it with other things of the same nature. In the realm of language we do this by reading and listening. The cheaper listening has become (broadcast symphonies, operas, sermons, etc.) and the less effort we have to exert, the duller is our perception. We rarely are capable of expressing finesse anymore for we either indulge in an ironic style, as members of the learned professions like to do, or we fall into bathos as the majority of preachers demonstrate. We are always anxious to put a "message" across. Thus language is little more than a convenience, a commodity, or a means of communication. Such an attitude is not very propitious to the study

of foreign languages. These, however, like nothing else, can make the student aware of his native tongue, which by the foreign tongue becomes more finely wrought, more precise and resilient. The present upsurge and stress on foreign languages is an expedient one, not one in essence; it has a practical goal which one approaches with converted mass production methods. We forget too easily that the mastery of a foreign idiom depends—as far as its interpretation and application are concerned—upon the mind of man. Language as a tool is merely a tool, and tools are auxiliary means. Their command alone guarantees nothing creative. Textbooks trade willingly cultural values for everyday situations with sports events, traffic problems, and entertainment—even in Latin. This incredible adjustment is being justified by the assertion that the interest of students will be greatly aroused. What kind of interest? one feels compelled to ask.

Not so long ago I took a group of graduate students to Europe. In Oxford we were shown around by a young, tall, and athletically built chap. He led us through various colleges and the one where he himself was studying. What was he studying? the group wanted to know. Latin and Greek and the great poets. What for? was the astonished and almost compassionate question. Was he going to teach? He did not think so. He was planning to go into business, or commerce, as he put it. Into business? What did he need Latin and Greek for? Our guide looked at us pensively. "To be a man, you've got to be a man, haven't you?" he said. "It's very beautiful and quite practical, you know."

We have courses for remedial reading in colleges; we put aside anything that is not immediately comprehensible to us unless a closer and more laborious study promises us financial reward or physical comfort. The more basic our language is, the more abbreviated and dedicated to convenient grooves, the poorer our very lives are. Adjustment usually has a downward motion and comes to an end only when there is sufficient resistance. This resistance can only be in the mind of man. Unless he is willing to see that poor language necessitates poor thinking and a shallow life, he will adjust himself more and more to lower strata and be commensurately "happier" until he reaches the blissful stage of an animal. There, however, unforeseen troubles will lie in wait for him.

A visitor looks at the American university

WILL G. MOORE

The grade I would desire for this paper is E (Incomplete, if I have learned my new academic jargon correctly). For a stranger has the choice only between being either false or fragmentary, the former if he tries to be complete, the latter if he sticks to what he knows. A year's work at the University of California, brief interchanges with colleagues in the East, a lively encounter with the students of Yale, and brief visits to such different institutions as Dartmouth, Pomona, Colorado College, and the University of Colorado—such is the basis for the picture in my mind.

To a European scholar the mere chance of seeing so many and so different schools means primarily one thing: enrichment. Imagine yourself coming to America when you have passed fifty, when you have taught for twenty-five years in the oldest English university, lived with its historic buildings, its air of tradition, its feverishly competitive intellectual atmosphere, its insularity, its discussions of the British situation—and that means of things like Redbrick, the University Grants Committee (the Parliamentary body that watches over the finance and development of our universities).

Americans, I was told at home, are friendly people, and I have found it true beyond my expectation. But hospitality should not, and did not, soften the shock of being suddenly a part of a California university with eight campuses and over 20,000 students, of lunch-hour lectures and overcrowded reading rooms, and of bookshops offering a fantastic plethora of potted learning.

In sorting out all this, I was fortunate to be allowed to attend United Nations Week and the Conference on World Affairs at the University of Colorado, an occasion which impressed me as being in itself, quite apart from the actual lectures, a notable academic experiment. The eruption on that delightful campus must have disturbed faculty and administration more than a little. Having organized similar gatherings in Oxford I felt some instinctive sym-

pathy with them. But that the students welcomed the interruption, we visitors could be in no doubt. They took a week off, and with both hands. They turned up in force, not only to hear the wits but to a sober session, at the witching hour of 4:10 p.m., on "The University in the Modern World." This was as informative for me as it could have been for anyone else, for it allowed me to watch the impact on American students of points commonly made in European discussions. In their wisdom the organizers had appointed for my performance two expert critics in Professor Clarence Ayres of Texas and Professor Harrison Brown of the California Institute of Technology, and the general atmosphere, even in a crowded room, was so friendly that this visitor at least will not soon forget it.

I did my best to make four points, four unanswered questions that seem to me to lame the activity of the university in our world. Is the university free? Is it effective? Is it modern? Does it offer any certainty? These may seem very "English" questions, and I think that many of my audience found them unreal questions. My impression afterwards was that we had enjoyed a useful exchange of opinions but had reached no clear agreement. In Europe I should have been more pessimistic than I was in Boulder and spoken of the materialism that regards universities as irrelevant, of the academic jealousies that induced one teacher to paraphrase the Old Testament and say: "... that mine enemy had founded a college."

But this was out of the question since my audience was clearly more optimistic, and less bothered, about these things than I was. They did not know, or care, that the university in America is not free, that taxation revenues or private funds may in a day of hardship be cut off. Nor were they troubled that the university may fail to do all the things that a modern society asks of it: fail to supply enough vocational training, enough researchers, enough culture. They were cushioned against all this, for to them the university was a means of getting a certificate, a passport to society or to marriage. As so often, the lecturer missed the point because he did not know on what soil his words were falling.

My third point was, I think, both intelligible and agreeable to them: that the university might well modernize its methods, that the techniques of learning perhaps need not always remain what they have been for centuries: the written word in the textbook,

the spoken word in the lecture. They agreed, when pressed, that often neither of these was effective. They took the point well made by Professor Ayres that mass instruction does not instruct, that nothing is conveyed without the inquiring mind, not to anybody save the individual, not to the class or the mass. Dr. Harrison Brown cleverly built on this point to suggest that where the university tries to be modern it is often ludicrous: he gave instances of courses that one would not expect to find in any university program: Home Lighting I, II, and III, for instance, or, in a course in Physical Education, one unit for Rest.

This was just about the sum of the agreement I secured. My fourth point also fell on deaf ears. My nice audience was quite unmoved to hear that the university has been criticized in Europe for offering no certainty. Why should it? That was the task of home or church. They seemed worlds away from the neutrality that Moberly has complained of:

If you want a bomb the chemistry department will teach you how to make it, if you want a cathedral the department of architecture will teach you how to build it, if you want a healthy body the departments of physiology and medicine will teach you how to tend it. But when you ask whether and why you should want bombs or cathedrals or healthy bodies, the university can give no guidance. In living their lives the young are left "the sport of every random gust."

Who is right here? Do we exaggerate our neutrality? Is the American student so immature that he does not want direction in the concealed choices? If I were allowed the meeting over again, I would put the point in reverse and try to find out if students are conscious that in some ways they get much more direction than their English counterparts get. Professors in America do not call for decision from a student; they do not put him in the way of getting the relevant facts and leave him to make up his mind. They convey the facts with authority and expect them to be taken down. Is not this, in a double sense, dictation? "What do you think? What does the evidence suggest?" These are questions asked every week of the Oxford student. Does the young American ever face them?

In writing so, I may be going too far. My impression is that the

strongest forces in the American university are the least vocal and the least obvious, the quiet work of professors with graduate students. At this level, the university in this country is really doing, and over a very wide area, what Newman asked of a university: it is contributing to that "true enlargement of mind, which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values and determining their mutual dependence."

Yet my experience at the University of California makes me question even this. My graduate seminar was composed of some of the most alert students I have ever had, what I should take to be a fair cross section of American graduate intelligence. Yet they all welcomed English teaching methods because in most classes they had no time to think and no chance to discuss. Their time is taken up with assimilation of knowledge. So I still do not know whether even graduate students have time to question what they discover. Or are they forced to accept the professor as Dean Barzun's candidate accepted Aristotle? "Aristotle wrote on everything that interested him. He seemed to believe himself an authority on all of them. Fortunately for us, he was."

Do we touch here the nerve of university failure, the real thing that separates teachers and taught? Separation of age is worse than barriers between departments. Whitehead considered it a monstrous presumption that "university lecturers should think themselves competent to go on talking year after year to young men while holding themselves aloof from the opportunity of learning from eager youth."

This is a difficult point to enforce, since the position of a student vis-à-vis his teacher may in any university revert from co-operation to concurrence. An Oxford paper received while these pages were in composition tells of a course of lectures on philosophy that ended thus: "So we see that Plato was always wrong, Aristotle sometimes wrong and sometimes right, Bacon always right."

With that in mind, what right has an Oxford teacher to criticize the American university? I do so only because an impression that the visitor cannot avoid is that of the eager goodwill of the students. They crowd to lectures of all sorts at all hours, but their

attention is the reverse of eager; it ranges from the listless and the languid to the dutiful look on the face of the born note-taker. The whole matter might be put at a deeper level by saying that both here and in Europe we seem to have lost the original sense of the *universitas*, that "whole body of masters and scholars" who together search for the truth. The recovery of that sense is perhaps more important than assured funds or modern facilities.

WIND STORM

By ANN CASWELL

Whatever is most lost
must move upon the plain
grown treacherous with
wind-inverted trees; the pain

of all forever lost
is incompletely
gestured by the dust

that spirals on the wind;
the hurt is huddled deep
in cattle, is the eave-moan
in the house where sleep

forever is the lost
most sought in silence,
and the seeker, dust.

Masters and the revolt from the village

AUGUST DERLETH

They always said we were in revolt from the village—Lewis and Anderson and I—Carl Van Doren started that, I guess, and everybody else parroted him—those fellows who wanted to be critics and women who taught what they called American literature. It was all nonsense, but they perpetuated it . . .

Edgar Lee Masters at seventy-one looked like a professional man gone wayward into art. Strength and power were in his figure, in his words. He was heavy, but not fat, with the thickness and solidity of a country man. His hair was almost white, and thin enough to look disheveled. His mood varied from the genial and thoughtful to the crochety as he talked in his apartment in the old Chelsea Hotel. The year was 1940; I had come to spend one of several afternoons with him after a correspondence of some years. I was then teaching American Regional Literature at the University of Wisconsin, and we were talking about the critics' theme of the revolt from the village, which had been stressed in an academic study of the small town in American literature which had just been published.

The people who wrote those books and take that line—have they ever done anything? Have they ever lived? I want to know. I never heard of most of those people. I never saw their names on anything really creative. There never was anything to this revolt from the village business. We didn't do any such thing. Maybe Lewis backed away from something that hurt him, but he wasn't rebelling against the American small town any more than I was. Sure, there's plenty of meanness and narrowness in the American small town; there always was. But there's nobility and courage and comedy, too—I said it all in Petit—"Life all around me here in the village: Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth, Courage, constancy, heroism, failure— All in the loom . . ." We weren't rebelling against the village. We were seeing it whole, without blinders.

I mentioned Zona Gale's Friendship Village stories as typical of fiction before the midwestern renaissance. Appleton Century had just published my biography of Zona, and the subject seemed apropos.

All one-sided. She was a sentimental idealist—a fine woman—but she didn't get close to the small town till she wrote Miss Lulu Bett and Birth. She saw people whole in most of her short stories after Lulu. But most of the writers of about that time—well, there've always been a lot of them; they can turn out slick stories—maybe they feel their stories, I don't know, I don't see how they can. There's nothing in what they write that tells me they understand people. And the people know it, too. The people who count.

We began to talk about *Spoon River Anthology*. I wanted his opinion about its immediate popularity. What was it about the book that made its appeal to readers a quarter of a century ago?

What do you feel in it? What made you like it?

Truth, I said. The people in it were the people of my own Sac Prairie, Wisconsin. The universality of its portraits . . .

Well, that was it. The people were ready for Spoon River. They needed that kind of book. They'd had their fill of moonlight and silly love stories. They'd had enough of sentimentality and unreality. They wanted books like Sister Carrie and Winesburg, Ohio, and Spoon River and Main Street because they were about flesh and blood men and women—like the men and women they knew—the men and women I knew at Petersburg and Lewistown and the Sangamon country—the men and women you know in Sac Prairie.

And I suppose the book reviewers and the critics were filled up with romantic nonsense, too. They wanted realism. They wanted to be put in touch with common life. Of course, the critics can't help themselves—a lot of them couldn't see Spoon River as a portrait of a town—and I tell you I knew those people—they had to say it was my own frustration—my bitterness—coming out in those poems.

Bitterness crept into his voice—the same angry bitterness I was to hear in Sherwood Anderson's complaint not long after about critics. "Some of the criticism of my work troubled me—calling the people I wrote about 'hopeless'—'defeated.' They didn't seem

hopeless to me. They were the people I knew everywhere. And most are defeated. Isn't that life? And some of those critics charged that I and others who were writing then were dirty-minded because we realized the terrific effect of the sex urge on people. That kind of criticism was like spreading dirt over the people I wrote about. I'm not much concerned now; I was then. Now a man has to work under the guns." Thus Anderson.

Masters stirred restlessly in the big chair where he sat. The sunlight coming into the apartment through the windows behind him made a kind of halo about his head. It seemed false. He spoke with vigorous conviction about the unfairness of publishers, the currents in American political thought, the trends in criticism . . .

There's so much bad criticism coming out now-a-day that it's discouraging to face it. These little men are concerned with ideologies, with abstracts, not the book in hand. They want to criticize your work on a basis of your social consciousness. Damned nonsense! The belief that you have to write about society, its economic phases, so forth, is a wild obsession. As for -isms—I haven't any use for the lot of them, unless it's good old-fashioned Americanism.

I brought the conversation back to *Spoon River Anthology*, quoting critical reaction about his "disillusionment."

I didn't feel that way at all, but I guess it wouldn't make any difference what I said; the critics would want their own way. I felt hopeful, joyous—that was the time before the war came to knock our blocks over. But it wouldn't make any difference to the critics if I said I was only telling the truth—making a record of what I had seen and learned. I've said it before. Nobody seems to have heard it. Those fellows get a line going and they have to follow it. When you call them on it, they fall back on a second line that goes like this—the author did it unwittingly—not what he says he did but what they say he did. Some of those critics are very good men as men, but as minds they're nothing. I never answered criticism, and I won't start now.

The critics with their morals for measures and their picayune moral tests made life miserable for Dreiser—but it's Dreiser who's being read now, and who can remember even the names of those pious frauds who tried to censor Sister Carrie? It beats hell how

reviewers who can't write anything themselves and don't know much—they don't know anything of a writer's country—rush in just the same and tell a writer what he should do and what he shouldn't do and the like. They never knew Spoon River or Gopher Prairie or any of those places, but they pretended to know all about our revolt from the village and they won't believe to this day there never was any such thing. There are poems in my Spoon River books about faithful and loving hearts, about kind and generous and hopeful people, but they don't seem to have read them—it wouldn't fit in with their line to know about them. The best years of my life were spent back there in Illinois. To say that I was in revolt against village life when I was just seeing it truthfully is being just about as silly as you can get.

His indignation simmered, faded. He shook his head when I wanted to pursue the subject. He wanted to talk about the Wisconsin country where I lived and worked, but he did so primarily to stir his memories of the Illinois of his youth, filling the apartment with his nostalgia as he spoke of his parents, of his father's death—showing me the death mask he had made because he couldn't bear to think of never again looking upon that serene face, of his Uncle Will, who still lived in the Sangamon country, of his boyhood and the beauty of the Sangamon where he had gone catfishing and bull-heading so often.

But he could not go back there. He needed the stimulation of the city; he needed someone to whom he could talk about creative matters. He wanted to be where creative events were taking place. He was still writing, and showed me over four hundred poems, few of which had even been submitted for publication—and none of which has since made its appearance in a posthumous Masters collection.

He grew mellow and his eyes glowed when he spoke of going back to visit in Illinois; he made his youth there newly meaningful. But it was plain that, however tired and dissatisfied he was, Masters knew that the past could not be recaptured; however much he wanted to return to the village milieu against which he insisted he had never revolted, he knew he could not go home again.

THE BUSHMEN PETROGLYPHS

By SAM BRADLEY

In Rhodesian caves, less familiar than Plato's,
Carved the early African, the X-mark Man,
Time-crossed and untexted. Snakes now guard
His jewelled, enclosed garden. Here his hands drew
Symbols, in line and color, himself first of all;
Then rhino, antelope, the Cape horse, mastodons,
And the bubalis bairdii, great-grandfather of bison—
Parade dug in the wall. Was this hunter first son
Of Lilith, shadow-shape, Lilith, who is illusion?

From trans-mortal mountains he came to hide, to draw,
Knowing belly's hunger and eyes' discontent.
For triumph he carved, and long life, till sleep robbed his
hand.

He is hardly asleep. In a low passage he's curled
Awaiting his hunter's sun and surrounded by witness.
I wonder: do his eyes, hid now, have Promethean heat?
Does he dream of a species with a lucky grasp on life?
Or of safer shelter from the interstellar abyss?
Here are his rock-engravings. Here is my wonder.

The fraternity of strangers

HARRIS DOWNEY

Miles Anders, stepping from the shower, grasped a towel from the rack, then ran through the door and over the rugs of the bedroom. Meeting himself at the closet mirror, he paused to stare. In recognition of his youth, he nodded his head as if to an old acquaintance. (Youth, in its fortieth year, might slip down the drain at any shower.)

The long towel shuttled his back; swabbed his armpits, his groin; went round his buttocks, down his legs—as, now and again, he spied the naked youth in the mirror drying himself, and oblivious of any eyes staring.

He might have spread his legs in an elegant posture, might have danced round the rugs shafting glances at the long body in the long mirror—except that Celia, at any moment, might appear at the door.

So, turning from the youth in the mirror (At what hour might he go bald and wither?), he put on his shorts and his socks, his trousers, his shoes. At the bureau, *his* bureau, he looked over the clutter of the dark mahogany: Celia's comb snarled in hair and her waddings of tissue; his brushes, and all the habits of his pockets—cigarettes, lighter, wallet. His fingers, like a beak, pecked up the three coppers and the quarter that lay round his wallet.

Celia had powdered herself at his mirror; in four little circles the mahogany shone bright. He stuck the coins into his pocket, unaware of his action as he snuffed the air for the certain smell of Celia. Then, in his palm, was the five-shilling piece that countless times over he had shifted from his trousers to the bureau, from the bureau to his trousers, as automatically as, just now, he had pocketed the anonymous coins. He didn't see the circle of brightness that it left on the bureau. He saw the reverse of the piece only—the sable man on the horse, rampant and sable. And again, he remembered—

At Bank Quay Station, above the streets of the Lancashire town, he walked down the platform. Eyes eyed his ankles. (He was twenty-six then.) Through the green twill of his trousers, he felt the start of desire as he walked past women and men, old and young. Here and there, his eyes met another's. And because they met without the barrier of name or intention, there was a quick understanding. His glance (or another's) could turn like a bee from a bush, could as swiftly deny any recognition of loneliness or desire. Such communion—so instant, so complete—falls readily between strangers. Captain Anders was brave in his searching glance, for his uniform declared him a stranger. And in a foreign place, one's more nearly himself than in the old roads where kinpeople and friends might fling open a door: *Where are you off to?*

Thinking of the honesty of his eyes, Captain Anders walked to the rail and looked out on the grimy roofs of Warrington cluttered with chimney pots. His loneliness was his whole being. Not that loneliness had been any the less real in his own town! But at home, it was so intermingled with the memories of landmarks and faces that one went about for days on end before the slumbering purr of his separateness would strike out a claw: *Hello, Miles*. He would lift his eyes to an acquaintance but already the sound of his name, his very identity, would be standing between them like a wall.

As he stood at the rail of the platform, a knee cocked just-so to make a picture, Captain Anders looked over the roofs of the town, remembering, in a Jack Robinson of memory, the quick confidences he had made in a pub, in a queue, in a dim-lighted compartment from Liverpool to Penketh Heath—all to women or men that the blackout would finally claim or that the train would carry away. He drew a handkerchief from his pocket and pressed it to his forehead—remembering the young English sergeant with whom he had pub-crawled one night when lights veered crosswise in the sky to point the enemy planes over London; with whom, over a second or third pint and in the din of alarm, he had exchanged such confidences as he could never exchange with any fellow from home. A month later, when he met the towheaded

sergeant as a colleague at his base, he had blushed so furiously that sweat stood on his brow.

There was a roar in the tracks. The express was rounding the housetops into the station. Thrusting his handkerchief into his pocket, Captain Anders swung from the rail and, going over the platform, caught up his bag and his coat from the bench where he had left them beside an old man half-asleep. Before the train came to a stop, he was walking against its passage, seeking a compartment without a NO SMOKING sign—and without too many people. Miles Anders was contemplative by nature. In a train, he liked to stretch out his legs and watch the green country of England roll on.

Then he paused. He about-faced and ran back with the train—his trench coat and his bag dangling from his wrist. At the compartment that he spied as his need, he grasped the handle. As he flung open the door, the train stopped.

She was alone—gazing out upon the roofs of the town. Though he had leapt into the compartment and slammed the door to, she never turned from the window. She held a book in her lap, her thumb between its pages, her fingers arched against its back. The compartment smelled of wet mackintoshes and smoke; others had recently sat here. Yet he felt like an intruder. He made a *do* of clearing his throat and, when she didn't turn from the window, he ventured a *Do you mind?* and was more startled at the Lancashire inflection in his question than he was at the face that looked round—first to the buckle at his waist, then up to his eyes.

She was lovely: black hair under a tam, and gentian-bright eyes. Her skin was like milk; and in her eyes, on her lips, there were colors like jewels.

The platform was a commotion of luggage and doors. He turned just in time to scowl away two English soldiers at the door. When he turned back, he saw the answer to his question: she had opened her book and was gazing upon it.

He lifted his coat to the overhead rack. He was dressed in his finest green trousers and his green blouse. His long body, at the high rack, screamed its attraction. Her gaze was on the book; but, knowing that her vision must encompass him too, he stood a long

while stretching his arms to adjust the coat in the rack, then to lift the musette atop it.

He sat on the opposite seat at the farthest end from the white fingers on the green book. He looked through the glass of the door to the diminishing activity of the platform: a porter pushing a dinky by, an old lady lifting a handkerchief. The giraffe, with the bottle caught in his throat, seemed to be grinning at him. As he read the inevitable *My Goodness! My Guinness!* the train began to pull from the station. There was an old man holding a tottering boy's hand as they stood against the importunate *Bovril!* The tea room, the latrine, then the end-post of the platform swung by. There was a tall tree; then, like the opening of a fan, the cloud-dappled sky spread over the housetops. He looked down into the backyards swinging by—to the tomato vines and lupines under the wash of a line and, here and there, the upturned faces of women and children. Amidst it all, he conjured the face above the green book. Was the nose tilted *so*? Did the eyebrows, curling down, really end upwards? Between now and Chester could he keep his eyes to the countryside? God! Even if his traveler were an old man eating biscuits from out a page of *The Mirror*, how could he resist a tribute or a question at the passing of a tree-studded hill? He knew his eyes—how they'd rove to correct his memory of lashes, to discover the name of a book. He was so prudent of his eyes' audacity that he crossed his legs towards his own window and, almost touching his nose to the glass, clasped his chin in his hand.

By the time that the town gave way to the fields, he decided that at the first stop he'd find another compartment—a place among soldiers, or old clerks talking of Montgomery and Wellington; for the lady ignored him as one ignores spittle on a stair. Yet, she was lovely. He took off his cap and, setting it beside him, pressed his brow to the window. Here, he'd not dare trust his eyes.

The barley fields stretched their green as far as the sky. He breathed deep as he lowered the glass of the door. Ah, the freshness of Lancashire fields! Yet, *ignoring* in itself is a lawlessness, he thought. An unconventional thing. Perhaps a fear. Surely, in scarcity and war, it was an unnatural thing. . . . Might not her disregard be an obtuse acceptance? An invitation even?

He had heard soldiers' tales of passions shared without names

exchanged, or *any* word uttered—only a recognition of desire, perhaps a gesture *to* accent it, then no more than a gasp at its consummation and a sigh as farewell. In his own ramblings he had discovered the validity of such tales.

Though he dallied with his decision to move, he'd sit firm at the next stop and stare like an ogre upon any person who paused at the door; for in that first glance, from his buckle to his eyes, had he not captured an answer? No gaze into a book could silence it. Nor could prudence or sham. He knew the language of eyes. Before the third stop, he'd have the soft fingers in his own—unless some garrulous sailor sat between them, or some old lady with a basket of pippins.

The Mersey Valley gave way to the Cheshire meadows and their crayon hills. The sun seemed to linger at the quarter of the sky.

Then he was beside her, gazing down at the red fingertips clutched tight in his fist. A moment before, he had kissed them. Now the bite of the diamond into his palm made him realize the eagerness of his clasp. He opened his hand, watched her fingers spread to the air and drop to her lap. Neither then, nor any time after, could he recount his attitudes, or hers, between his brow to the window and his lips to the fingers. But he had correctly read that first fleeting glance. Leaning over her, he stared into her eyes.

The train rumbled past the tree-covered hills.

"Captain," she said, as though his rank was a caution. "Captain!"

"In Chester," he said.

"I'm for Llandudno," she said.

"After Chester." He screwed his long fingers round her neck and into her hair. "*After* Chester."

She trembled. "After Chester," she whispered.

"What's your name?" He took the book from her lap, set it aside on the seat; now its title didn't matter. His hands were about her.

"Call me Phyllis." She laughed against his lips.

"Is that really your name?"

"Tonight I am Phyllis."

At the station in Chester, he put the larger of her two cases into a locker. Then, smiling, he took the book from under her arm

and ceremoniously placed it atop the stiff, battered case. He slammed the locker to; and—as he straightened up, adjusting the musette bag at his shoulder—she held out her hand. He looked into her eyes questioningly; yet obediently he dropped the key of the locker into her hand—encased, now, in a white glove. He didn't know, then, that this was her farewell (twelve hours or more out of sequence; free of words, of the incrimination that words make; free of apocryphal promises). He only wondered whether she doubted him, even whether she thought that he might steal her luggage.

Daylight was still in the street. They walked hurriedly. Neither had said a word since the train slowed down for the station. He barely knew his direction. They turned into Eastgate and walked under the wall of the town before he surmised that the gentle hand on his arm was leading him. Communication now was entirely through touch.

Light lay in the street down below them; but, under the arcades of the Rows, they walked in the privacy of shadow. Then, at a pressure on his arm, they turned and entered a door.

There was a chairless foyer; and, in its center, a cage. "They might be curious," she said.

"I'll manage," he answered.

He had never been here before, but he recognized the setting: a silent foyer; an empty cage; and, beyond a ledge of windows and an opened door, a dim-lighted and murmuring pub. The booking lady was beyond the windows, behind the till of the pub. He went to the cage and dinged the bell. The woman from the till was half upon him already.

Phyllis had left him. She was at the mirror of the umbrella stand taking off her tam and adjusting her hair. He had no idea what he would say if the woman questioned him closely. His easy smile, his expectation of trust, his surprise at English requirements—these, as warranty, had been pretty much spent by countless other Americans; they'd not be worth a damn for him and his pseudonymous Phyllis. "Give me none of your hanky-panky," the booking lady might say. "It's a respectable place that we keep." Indeed, even as she entered the cage, her face was hard

and appraising. She was squinting her eyes towards the stand, where Phyllis stood, flouncing her hair.

"Sir?" She looked at him as though he were a soiled mackintosh that should hang itself nowhere but on a peg in the vault. Her lips were drawn down in a crescent. Her suspicion was as obvious as the Dee in the glades.

On the counter of the cage he opened his wallet in the way that, even yet, made Englishmen wonder at the naturalness of American soldiers. He knew the frailty of the English mask: *Touch a mutual value behind it, and it falls away*. But he was biding his time till he found the proper words. He flipped down his officer's card and, from the supine wallet, fanned out the notes. Then the words wheeled in his mind: "If you have a room for us at this hour—" Of course, there was always a last room. A last beer, a last bit of cheese. If they had a mind for it! If you reminded them of something in themselves! "And if you could keep a confidence—," he stammered, "I'd like to ask that we have supper in the room." He might have spat in her face, the way she stared at his lips. He said: "I know it's an unusual request for these days; but it's an occasion, you see. We were married only this morning." His voice almost pealed an old Mendelssohn melody. "In Oldham," he said, and that clenched the deception. ("Oh, that was the clever one," she'd say, if later she discovered his lies. In admiration, she'd strike her thigh with her liver-splotched hand: "With his real teeth, and his smile and all!") Her eyes widened and relaxed. He had been inspired to say *Oldham*. *In London* or *in Birmingham* wouldn't have fit the schedule of trains. She would have said, "We're full booked," and gone out of the cage to her customers in the parlor tapping their glasses to the bar. *In Manchester* would have conjured the anonymity of a million souls; she would have asked, "And your license?" But *in Oldham* was as convincing as an exact address in a familiar village—though he himself had never known where Manchester ended and Oldham began.

"Yes, Captain," she said. "Supper's long over, but we'll manage something for your room." She pushed forth a card, handed him a pen. "At least, we'll have lupines." She was making a joke on the scarcity of things. "We'll pretty the tray." She smiled round His Majesty's teeth, proud of her humor. She took three notes

from his wallet. "Supper tonight. And a bottle of port!" She made change in the drawer of the cage. "And bed and breakfast." She set the shillings and pennies on his wallet. "But mind you," she said, "in the *dining* room for breakfast. And before *nine*."

He had forgotten Phyllis the while. But there she was, still at the mirror, as though her hair were Medusa's. He slipped the notes back to his wallet and dropped the change to his pocket.

"Herbert!"

The woman's voice startled him. Then beyond her, beyond the cage, he saw Herbert. He was rising from a chair against the public room's wall.

Herbert was weighty and old. Coming out of the shadows, he rubbed his chin, then his cheek and his brow. His eyes were hardly opened as he took the key that she had lifted in a Harlequin gesture. It was such a key as might have opened Blenheim; dangling from it, the shape and size of a pancake, was its tag. "There's baggage in front!" the voice boomed. Of course, Herbert was near-deaf, else dull enough to make one think that yelling might make him understand. He came round the cage, the great tag swinging from his fat hand. He didn't even glance at the Captain, or look back at Phyllis. His eyes sought only the satchel. Yet, at any inquisition, he'd probably relate the size and the age and the complexion, the positions and the stances and the expressions, of a Welch woman and an American captain. And in the most of it, he'd likely be accurate. With the satchel, like a toy in his hand, he ascended the stair—his movement ponderous and slow, his interest for the steps only.

At the umbrella stand, the Captain looked at the face in the mirror, then held out a hand to lead his Phyllis away. She hesitated a while. The look between them, in the mirror, was an acknowledgment of their conspiracy and an accord of its rightness. Her hair was jet; her eyes were blue. He was so captured by her loveliness that he wished his lie were a truth. Putting his hand to her elbow, he turned her towards the stair. His heart pounded like the heart of a bridegroom; for here, indeed, ascending before him, was his bride.

Nights are short in Cheshire's summer. The sun lingers. Larkspur and lupines rise, like a scare, round a door—their color and

shape an *I-dare-you* against the levelling light of the moon. Flowers hold their identity: *I'm a jasmine*. The Dee, but for the moon lighting it gold here and there, stands an azure road through the glades. Pigeons sleep in their anonymous places (beaks under their wings, if, *so*, pigeons sleep) and dream of the corn-spread morning. The walls of the city and the structures above it cast shadows of the moon and, in shadows, affirm their identities.

The Captain, thinking these things, lay back in his bath. His fingers went over his legs and he thought: *Pleasure is ephemeral. You had as well clutch the moonlight. There's only anticipation; and, after that, recollection.*

The night before—standing by the river, her arm in his—he had spread his hand to the moonlight and said— What was it he had said? Something silly, perhaps. But the feeling that prompted the words had been real. Now, even in this cubicle with the sunlight in its high window, the feeling returned—perhaps had been in him all the while. There was a certain pride which he felt. And *that* he understood. He lay back in the tub, flushed the water under his arms and over his chest. The pride was a pride in his body, but never in words would he express it. Besides, words are unnecessary for so communicable a thing. A shift of the hip, a way of rising, the unbuttoning of a shirt—such gestures are more telling than words. But what was it that he felt and couldn't name—that was deeper than pride, and ever so gentle?

He rose from the tub and stepped to the floor. He grasped the towel and began to dry his body carelessly. . . . When she shook his naked shoulder to awaken him, she had already been to the bath and had dressed. Did she mean to take a morning train to Llandudno? This wonder had just come to him; and, with it, the realization that their farewell would be his awakening from a fine dream. She had refused to name her name, had only laughed and looked away whenever he started a question that might make possible again this accident of strangers. All else had been so natural! He had taken it for granted that they'd have breakfast slowly, would walk through the sunshine of Chester and atop the wall to a stanchion where they could gaze over the greenside, over the years to Cromwell's army despoiling the country and closing upon them as they clasped each other's hands. Yet, perhaps at this mo-

ment, she was waiting to rush from the hotel into the Rows; under the gate of the city with hardly time for a handclasp or a word; then into the train, already in full steam for Llandudno—for a bastion of faces tagged with names, where the *Phyllis* in her is turtled apart, as mute and as idling as fancy.

His damp legs bolted against the twill of his trousers. (He had no robe, no slippers.) His shirt clung to the quick sweat of his shoulders.

He went down the dark hall and, before he opened the door, he understood: *She is gone!*

In the fraternity of strangers there are ecstasies that no one dares tell. And there are dangers: a knife in the ribs, a gun in the back. For all the joy of it, a tryst might end in disaster: a demand for a watch or a wallet, then blood on a counterpane. He clutched the pocket at his hip. His wallet was there.

"Sweet little Jesus in the manger!" His faithlessness had struck him like a whip. Yet he took out his wallet and counted his notes. Who'd even *tarry* for six crumpled pounds? . . . And there on the basin lay his watch. "Dear God!" he whispered. In a fleeting suspicion he had been renegade; had renounced all the loveliness of the night, all the courage of a lady who was lonely.

Of course, she had known, as he knew now, that their dream together could never *never* come again. Planned and connived for again, it would be a mean thing.

At the basin, he picked up his watch and fastened it round his wrist. This was *possession*—this gold chronometer and its gold band! Any soldier's worth is his watch. His lighter and his bracelets! The fit of his uniform and the cut of his hair! These shilling-things were his show to the world, far more valuable than pounds in the bank. In much the same way, encounters with strangers in a far place take on values even greater than those of love miles away at home—waiting.

He went to the window and looked down. Perhaps she had gone to wait in the garden. But, below, there was only an alley. At the dresser, seeking his tie, he saw the bright coin. It was placed just-so on his cigarette box, its nude and muscular figure ecstatically astride the galloping horse. Under the box was a message. The coin rolled to the floor as he snatched up the paper: "I shall have

made excuses below, if excuses seemed called for: telegrams to post, and such like—before I meet you at Chester Station. You'll catch the drift from the Padrona's smile. I can trust that; via the mirror, I saw you charm her. I leave you the stallion. I saw the avarice in your eyes when you held it and rubbed your thumb over its figure."

He stooped to all fours, found the coin, gazed at its loveliness again, then slipped it into the watch pocket of his trousers. What had she meant? Did she mock him? Did she really mean to meet him at the station?

He finished his dressing, packed his bag, flung the strap over his shoulder. Then, looking round the room for whatever one seeks on leaving a room for good, he saw the crumpled message that he had dropped to the floor. He picked it up and, forgetting the room key, went out the door and down the stair.

There was no one in the foyer but an old man bent over a bucket. "No breakfast for two-o-one," the Captain said. The old man, wringing his mop, looked up askew: "Morning, sir." It was obvious that how much hake was boiled in the kitchen was no care of his.

Under the shade of the Rows, the Captain spread the message to his palm and read it again, never slowing his pace. At the station, he sought out the locker that he had put the great case and the book in. It was empty. He dropped the bag from his shoulder into the locker, then slammed the door and turned the key. The station was silent; its tracks were empty. *She's on her way to Llandudno ... And that's that!*

He walked again into the sun of the street. Life went by on bicycles, on foot, and in lorries. He might have been a stone that the Romans laid centuries ago. For all the gleaming bars on his shoulders, he was as anonymous as grass. He went up the steps of the city's wall, walked its ledge past the thunderous Cathedral, came to a parapet and went in. He looked down into a torrent of water galloping over green-lichened rocks towards the green Dee. Across the gorge, a black regiment of trees leaned in the wind. The sky above it, crystalline blue, seemed to have motion. Except for the rush of water round rocks, the morning was still. Here, in this parapet, he was free from time. America and its shining cities (and

the London he knew, and the Leeds) were a fable. He would have no question to ask, even if he woke to discover that he had dropped his spear as he dozed on his shield. A loneliness caught him like rain—a loneliness for the centuries that this wall and its hurrying stream had known before him and would know long after he was grass on a Mississippi plain. Then he thought that, were she here for a leave-taking, the two of them (though still strangers in the world's way) might roll the past and the future into a Players and smoke it—the whole history of man caught in a moment of laughter and smoke.

All the while, he rubbed the locker key between his finger and thumb. Looking down, he let it drop to his palm. Then, staring at it, he wondered for the moment what it was.

Miles Anders—attorney at law, father of two sons—stood at his bureau and, midst his wife's ever-hovering scents, rubbed his thumb over the stallion and its rider. He was at his handsomest now, in his fortieth year. But he had forgotten the body that, moments ago, he admired in the mirror. He was remembering the coin. He turned it slowly. It was of such craft that even the Queen—weary, fat, stale, and most profitable—was an adornment. Her eyes were askew—as if she had known that this piece would live in to years that her eyes would never see, could never understand or admonish.

Staring at the virtuous Queen, Miles considered one act, among his countless other such acts, an infidelity. Yet, hadn't even she, with this coin in her hand (perhaps this very same coin), seen her fine Albert, all naked, leap on a horse and go galloping, galloping? Hadn't she, a thousand times over, looking at the long legs at the console of the organ, seen them naked—and in the gyrations of a mute and private music?

He turned the coin back to its nude. In any case, all his infidelities were out of time—before Celia. Anachronisms only! Indiscretions only—unless to remember them passionately is infidelity.

He looked up. In the mirror, their eyes met. For the wonder that he felt, he might have been caught in assignation. Celia's

shoulders were bare. The jewel at her breast shone like a star. "Right now we're due at the Adamses," she said.

The scent of her was like an awakening. Then she was against his moist back, her left hand on his shoulder. She stretched her right hand along his arm and touched his palm—and the coin. In this embrace they stood a while, eyes searching eyes in the mirror. She didn't ask (as, many times, he had feared she might ask), "What does this mean—this English dollar?" Surely, somewhere, she had her own token of a secret remembrance.

"And the boys?" he asked lightly.

"Maggie's here."

In any man's memory there are things that can't be named to his beloved: a certain Phyllis who assumed all the Phyllises, a heroic conviction once paralyzed by doubt, the adjustment of an inspiration to a probable attainment. He closed his hand upon her fingers; then, turning, slid the coin into the pocket of his trousers.

In the turning, she was close in his arms. He dared not look into her eyes lest she ask *Is it so rare a coin?* or say cryptically *Memory comes between us now and then*. He held her gently. Her shoulders were cool under his fingers.

Full nakedness of body and mind is ecstatic, he thought. Yet the figure draped with a consciousness of tomorrow and long habit—is that not lovelier still? Her eyes were closed. He touched his lips to her brow.

"Miles!" His name was a whisper. And that's all that she said. She turned away to go count the boys a last time: *one* and *two*. There had been no question round his far-away name. Nonetheless, there was a trickle of sweat at his brow. He brushed it away with his finger.

Stuffing the stiff shirt into his trousers, he decided that the change in his pocket was burdensome. He took out the heavy coin and dropped it into the drawer of handkerchiefs and socks. A week or half-a-year hence, he might discover it again (as he had done times before) and carry it around, for a day or a month, among his pennies and dimes.

"My old man said to follow the tram—" The song that he sang as he buttoned his shirt was as meaningless as any song that his mother had sung him. "And not dilly-dally on the way."

Ezra Pound or Sophocles

DONALD SUTHERLAND

Now that Ezra Pound has been liberated, so has thought about his work. After some thirteen years of constraint, one may at last attack or defend his work without seeming to take a cheap advantage of his personal predicament. One might now also discuss the morality of his case without passion, but the interest of it is slight without the passion. The interest of his work, however, maintains itself.

Full descriptions of his work will no doubt be upon us before long, since it has devoted friends and devoted enemies. So I take it that, as an enemy of sorts but not devoted, I may neglect his work as a whole without its suffering in the least from neglect and consider only a few points at which some of it seems to touch the present configuration of American poetry.

The most salient feature of his work is its learning. That the learning is faulty is of no consequence; it is eminently by his influence that so much American poetry has gone learned, though it has been and is being made more so by the scholarly methods of newish criticism and the numberless younger poets who are university people.

In poetry, as in anything, learning is not a fixed value but varies widely with its function. It can pervert thought and feeling or even prevent them, as readily as it can enrich or refine. Its common uses as a source, as a method, as a property, as a snow job, or as a pastime, can be beneficent or vicious or mixtures of both, depending on the case. The case of Pound's version of *The Women Of Trachis* exhibits a very rich mixture of motives typical of much current writing.

It was written to pass the time in the asylum, and one cannot decently quarrel with that motive. But some of his friends say that here, as in many earlier works, his learning has repossessed a neglected classic for our living culture, and about this there is ground

for a quarrel. This particular classic can fairly enough be said to be negligible or Pound's use of it vicious, and the Culture to which it contributes neither ours nor living.

The Women Of Trachis is from the Greek, and from what is held to be the very best Greek, that of Sophocles. Knowing the very best Greek still passes for the final panache in learning. Though pure learning requires only literacy, patience, and memory, it can inadvertently be identified with intelligence, as on quiz programs, and learning in Greek implies an intelligence so extreme that anyone who knows the language of Sophocles can pass for knowing his mind as well. Whether amateur or professional, a Greek scholar, though he may keep his mind as impeccably English or German or American as it ever was, his Christian perspective unshortened, and his high-minded ignorance of the stage unsullied, can pronounce on Greek tragedy without serious challenge since he reads it in the original. It is the public mind in all of us which maintains the exorbitant credit of the mere Greek language and imposes it on scholars, but it is also the public mind which resents the credit and counters it with an imputation of pedantry or unsocial luxury. Rather as the most perfunctory cleric is forced to pass for virtue itself and is, at the same time, absolutely suspect.

The professional Greek scholar is driven to strategies. The simpler sort take to a combination of highly unhellenic humility and quite barbarous laboriousness, which gives a moral solemnity to what they say, whether within or beyond their specific competences. The subtler sort, including me, affect a dapper worldliness which foils the imputation of pedantry and reassures anyone that our Taste, if a luxury, is guaranteed good both by antiquity and by modernity. The first strategy is oriented on philosophy shading into theology, the second on a rather glossy Oxford or Ivy-league variant of Culture, which unfortunately requires knowing not only Greek but everything before and since. Pound's strategy is a third, based on his position as amateur, and drawn up for attack on the two professional positions as well as on the public mind. He superbly outflanks the professionals, since he is free to be more outrageously hieratic than the first kind and to indulge his multifarious sensibility far more extravagantly than the second.

There is no doubt that Pound is an amateur of genius, and no

doubt that an amateur of genius can have insights into both quality and fact which are not vouchsafed to the strictly academic mind. There is equally no doubt that the insights of an amateur of genius can be quite false, but the public mind in all of us prefers to believe that the folkloric type of the wise fool or canny rustic cannot be mistaken.

Pound works this prejudice of ours when he says that a passage in *The Woman of Trachis*, which he interprets as "what SPLENDOR, IT ALL COHERES," is the key phrase for which the play exists, and that "at least one sensitive Hellenist" has failed to grasp the "main form" of the play, which turns on this phrase. The main form and its key were not revealed until Pound, and if it were true that the play "presents the highest peak of Greek sensibility registered in any of the plays that have come down to us, and is, at the same time, nearest the original form of the God-Dance," as he says, the revelation would be impressive, if it were not illusory. Plays which are dramas and not merely staged lyrics or essays do not exist for the sake of key phrases, but use large and sharp language of the kind to point up the turns and issues of the action as it proceeds or concludes, the action itself being, as Aristotle would say, the "life" of the play, and "thought" being instrumental. Not that Aristotle is necessarily right, even about Greek drama, and it matters less that Pound, whose gift is for the ode or discursive lyric, would almost certainly misapprehend a Greek drama, than that his influence in any form carries with it an affinity for peremptory formulae and subordinates not only "the living labor of a play" but life generally to a "key phrase" or idea, and human disorder to divine ritual.

The "phrase" in the original has no such resonance or isolation as Pound gives it, but functions with only the slightest flourish in a particular account of how two prophecies have luminously come true together at the denouement. One of these, concerning the end of the hero's labors, was announced very early in the play, but the second, alluding to what the main action has been about, namely the devious manner of his death, is not mentioned until very late, so their agreement has nothing much to do with the main form except retrospectively, like the moral of a fairy tale. The coherence of the two prophecies is the key, not to the main dramat-

ic form but to Pound's conception of it, and according to his conception the play is not about people doing things but about Destiny manifesting itself. Which is not only pedantry but Teutonic pedantry affecting depth.

Moreover the material of the manifestation is not people but cosmological symbols. Deianeira is not a woman but the air of day, Hercules is not a hero but the solar vitality, and poor Iole is not a gorgeous captive girl but Tomorrow. At this rate it is impossible to take Pound seriously as an amateur Greek scholar or even as a humanist. He, like Robert Graves, is a pushover for tribalism and anthropology, in which the function of learning is to interpret everything backwards into terms of a basic savagery. It is also impossible to take the work seriously as translation, in spite of many beautifully and accurately turned passages. It is best taken as a version or adaptation.

The adaptation was made for Japanese actors, since Pound is a fan of the No drama, and they could no doubt stylize his play as a God-Dance with sensibility, but we may still consider it an English play since most of it is in English, both literate and illiterate, with only passing phrases in French or transliterated Greek for heightening. Japanese or English, it is most profitably taken as a contemporary play derived from Sophocles but independent, like *Medea* by Jeffers or *Antigone* by Cocteau. Such derivation has the legitimacy of long tradition, with precedents like Seneca, Racine, and Goethe. Sophocles becomes, in this freer relation, not a gauge of the new work as a translation, nor a competing work, but a reasonably clear and stable foil or set of coordinates against which criticism may appreciate the directions into which Pound's work has departed and evolved.

Sophocles varied his style during a long life but not widely. One may fairly if tritely say he operates on a mean between the sometimes flamboyant magniloquence of Aeschylus and the sometimes pretty and petty vernacular of Euripides. His humanity gravitates to an urbane sort of heroism, below the Titanism of Aeschylus but above the domesticities of Euripides. This description is distant and uninteresting but we have no reason to think it false. Un-

fortunately it helps Sophocles to pass, along with the Elgin marbles, for a gentlemanly norm of taste and so supports the fatuous tranquillities of the genteel tradition. Nevertheless Sophocles may stand as an exponent of the Human, a flexible enough category but not reaching above the heroic into the superhuman nor below the popular into the vulgar or savage. Pound's version forces Sophocles beyond himself in both directions at once, destroying the rather easily accessible heroic level and replacing it by a vertical polarity of the cosmic symbol and the village tough, so the audience is usually far below or far above the play and rarely on an elevated equality with it. Pound had good reasons for this distortion, both in his personal history and in contemporary fashion.

He was born in Hailey, Idaho, which must have been not only provincial but Godforsakenly so at the time. As a young man he went to London and made the provincial's classic assault on the metropolis, by being at once more savage and more exquisite than the metropolitans. This was then invigorating, both to Pound and to the metropolitans. Classical scholars owe to him and to his influence on T. S. Eliot a disturbance of the debilitated humanism then prevailing and represented well enough by the generation of Gilbert Murray, whose translations from the Greek—according to a younger T. S. Eliot—erected a barrier between us and the original dramas more impenetrable than the Greek language. Since then, genteel humanism has evolved, partly in response to the earlier irritations by Pound, into a much more sophisticated stage, bristling with refreshed ideation from the new criticism, Marxism, the dialectic of imagery, psychologized morals, historicized philosophy and philosophized history and what not—but Pound is hung up on his original attitudes, intensifying and exaggerating the Hailey element and the hieratic element without going beyond them. His characters sink below the metropolitan norm of Sophocles into the manner of village dolts and porch-sitting harridans while they represent, all the same, figures in a cosmic God-Dance. It is a pity. The older humanism might, even with Naturalism, Reinach, and Frazer to absorb the shock, have been startled out of its sufficiency by this, but our newer humanism, from which Sophocles the popular dramatist needs rescue almost as badly as he did

from the older, cannot be disturbed either by the vaudeville rusticity or the equally quaint anthropology.

But the public mind might go for this version, and perhaps did when it was uttered over the BBC. A polarity of the hieratic and the bestial has more than begun to govern the public sense of direction. Yeats, alas, furthers it, so does Jung, so does Spillane, so does most current theater, so does most Expressionism, whether abstract or concrete, and one could trace, if one cared to, the peculiar deviation and gathering of forces into this polarity out of very many writers, painters, and composers from the beginning of the twentieth century. Here I only care for the present result, which, seen against Sophocles, is very plain.

And nothing is plainer than the movie of the *Oedipus Rex* by Tyrone Guthrie, where you get, instead of human characters, hieratic monsters that look like animals and insects from another planet and do not walk or dance like men but roll about on the floor in an Old Testament abjection. The movie is Canadian, hence more acutely provincial than Pound, and suggests that what we have left of metropolitan and humanistic culture, like the cultures of Greece and Rome, will be simultaneously theologized and bestialized by provincials, to prepare it for the barbarians. Be our future history what it may, the present motive seems to be a profound and very lively detestation of the human.

Greek tragedy did begin as a ritual to a bestial god, Dionysus, but the course of Greek tragedy as we know it was a rapid secularization and humanization of that ritual—(exception, the *Bacchae* of Euripides at nearly the end of the development)—and if *The Women Of Trachis* is “nearest” to a God-Dance, it is still at a great distance. Though the hieratic and the bestial still exist for Sophocles, and in a few instances get onto his stage, they never dislocate his persistently anthropocentric action, and rarely so much as inflect the rational tenor of his style.

Pound, whose verbal instrument is prodigiously varied, naturally writes in a much wider range of tones than the original, but they tend to the extremes of two registers, the awfully cultivated and the grubbily vulgar. Here's the upper manner:

By the hearth stone
 brides to be
 Shout in male company:
 APOLLO EUPHARETRON
 Sylvan Artemis
 torch-lit Artemis
 With thy Ortygian girls,
 Analolu
 Artemis,
 Io Zagreus.

The word "EUPHARETRON" irritates you with two mistakes at once if you know Greek, and if you do not, it bugs you with an enigma which you do not know is not worth solving. Anyone at all may wonder who or what "Analolu" is, since she or it means nothing in Greek but appears to be a pretty set of syllables improvised out of a verb in the Greek text which charmed Pound's ear. I am told his ear for sounds in disconnection from semantics is very fine, and I shall not dispute it here. Allowing that the abstract patterning of the sounds is elegant and appositely girlish, so that the trifling with sense is justifiable, still he is composing also in varieties of cultural tone, and the tone of the whole passage is that of the villager who has been away to college and is back snowing the rubes with cultural noise. He might expect the villager to know who Artemis is or to look up Ortygia and Zagreus—being careful not to confuse Io the cry with Io the girl—but EUPHARETRON and Analolu are pure snow. Gertrude Stein's remark—that Ezra Pound is a village explainer, which is all right if you are a village, but if not, not—is not quite true for this case, where the explanation is replaced by stupefaction.

In the midst of these ritual ostentions of real and fabricated bric-a-brac or props of learning, he uses the word *sylvan*, a pretty word but typical of the most genteel feeling about things Grecian. His taste in them and his visual imagination of them—as projected in the *Cantos* as well—remain in the nineties, and he counters this effete and scarcely post Pre-Raphaelite estheticism less with a genuine twentieth century hardness than with a bumptiousness derived from Browning. It is Browning compounded with Idaho

which governs the lower manner, as in this:

All started when he had a letch for the girl,
And when her pro-eh-genitor 'Rytus wouldn't
let him put her to bed on the Q.T.

This is not a genuinely popular style but that of the vaudeville rustic or cracker-barrel philosopher being programmatically low, stumbling over words like "progenitor" and "Eurytus," a very simple name as Greek names go. Elsewhere the "city of Eurytus" is translated as "Eurytusville," which I take as the "key" to his lower register. As the upper manner freezes the human by the brandishing about of sanctities and heraldries of various kinds, the lower manner degrades and reduces the human to the village or the tribe. This dual tactic may be identified as Baroque or Fascist, but such a classification has little more than an academic interest now.

The more vital question is, why this detestation and exorcizing of the human, not only in Pound but in so much of our other poetry and in the public mind at large? Is it that humanity at the civilized level is so tedious or otherwise detestable by now that one naturally turns toward an inhuman sanctity or absolute of some kind above the human and toward animality or savagery below it? But if a kind of *taedium humanitatis* has brought us to this, a little learning can both console us with the thought that such a motive has not been uncommon in history and warn us that the categories of the divine and of the animal may be a relief but not a permanent recourse, since they inspire tedium even more rapidly than the human. As in this work of Pound the hieratic and folksy passages are overwhelmingly stale but certain passages done on the level are fresh.

One may suspect that civilized humanity, in spite of everything, is potentially more interesting than anything else, but how can it be made interesting and to stay interesting? I do not think that learned humanism, old or new, can do much about it, and confusing humanity with society or psychology or history is by now not only tedious but more depressing than confusing it with gods or animals. People do naturally inhabit all these dimensions, or relations, or contexts, but insofar as they are part of such contexts they are not very interesting, or not for long. The permanent source of

interest is rather the actuality of anybody living his life, in relation or not in relation to other people living theirs, and everything else is interesting only as it is material or circumstantial to the actual living being done by people, like props or scenery. Even morality, meaning, or the results of action are the mere material or direction of the actual life going on. So one may say, but a direct sense of life at the quick—which might be the essential poetic gift and is certainly the essential dramatic gift—is rare and most of our living, instead of stimulating what we have of it, dulls it. As Shelley remarked, in living we lose the sense of life. The sense of life has to be cultivated, and it might be the mission of humanistic learning not to elaborate the contexts of life but to clear them away so we can see the living straight, directly and distinctly. Sophocles gives the impression not only of seeing but of staring at the actuality of human living, and Pound has done no service to him or to us, distracting us from the essential by the horseplay of his sensibility to the more or less than human.

Pound's prodigious vitality goes mainly into the verbal eventfulness of his lines. One may not like the quality or content of the events, but the sheer excitement of their pace and frequency is a good and great thing, probably the best thing he offers. It is, however, proper to the ode, and quite secondary in a drama. It takes an Aeschylus or a Shakespeare to make the poetry and the drama of a line equally eventful, so if it is too bad it is no wonder that in Pound's play the verbal element is very eventful but the drama is inert and perfunctory, conceived moreover as a ritual or a dance. But this is a fashion, and followed by T. S. Eliot and Christopher Fry as well.

If Pound's vitality does nothing for the drama, neither does his rigor, which is almost as marked a feature of his work as his learning and corresponds to various toughnesses in vogue everywhere. Pound's toughness, like many others, is not intellectual or perceptual but moral, and takes the common form of truculence. Truculence has its uses, and one may prefer it to fatuous affection, but it works as a blind against the direct sense of other people living, and so is fatal to the drama. If his truculence, along with his esthetic sensibility or sentimentality, enriches the tonality of the *Cantos*, its inner poverty and defensiveness are horribly betrayed by

association with Sophocles. The urbane manner of Sophocles—which welcomes in advance the full existence and activity of other lives—comes from an interior toughness that can sustain a direct and unwavering gaze into the actuality of human living. It is not quite that he “saw life steadily and saw it whole”; he saw *living* and saw it directly, with some distortion for the better, perhaps, but without recourse to fantastic superhuman significances or to the picturesque simplifications of the view from below.

Whether or not Sophocles is exactly that, something very like that is, I believe, a coming thing, and Pound's version will not really dull the contemporaneity of Sophocles, try as it does.

authors

(Continued from Page 100)

the Rocky Mountains for the past two years. Her work has appeared in newspapers and in the little magazines.

AUGUST DERLETH (“Masters and the revolt from the village,” p. 164) has published eighty-six books, the most recent being *The Mill Creek Irregulars* (Duell, August 1959). His *Sac Prairie Saga* is a projected group of some fifty books designed to portray the social and economic life of a typical Wisconsin village from about 1830 to 1950.

SAM BRADLEY (“The bushmen petroglyphs,” poem, p. 168), well-known Quaker poet, teaches American lit-

erature at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania.

HARRIS DOWNEY (“The fraternity of strangers,” p. 169) has used a World War II background for several of his stories, including “The Witch of Tuna-le-Willow,” which appeared in the Winter (1959) *Colorado Quarterly*, and “The Hunters,” which won the O’Henry Award for 1951. He is the author of a novel, *Thunder in the Room* (Macmillan, 1956).

DONALD SUTHERLAND (“Ezra Pound or Sophocles,” p. 182), Professor of Classics at the University of Colorado, is a frequent contributor to *The Colorado Quarterly*. His articles can be read in the Autumn (1952), Autumn (1953), and Summer (1958) issues and his translations in the Summer (1953), Winter (1954), and Autumn (1957) issues.

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